

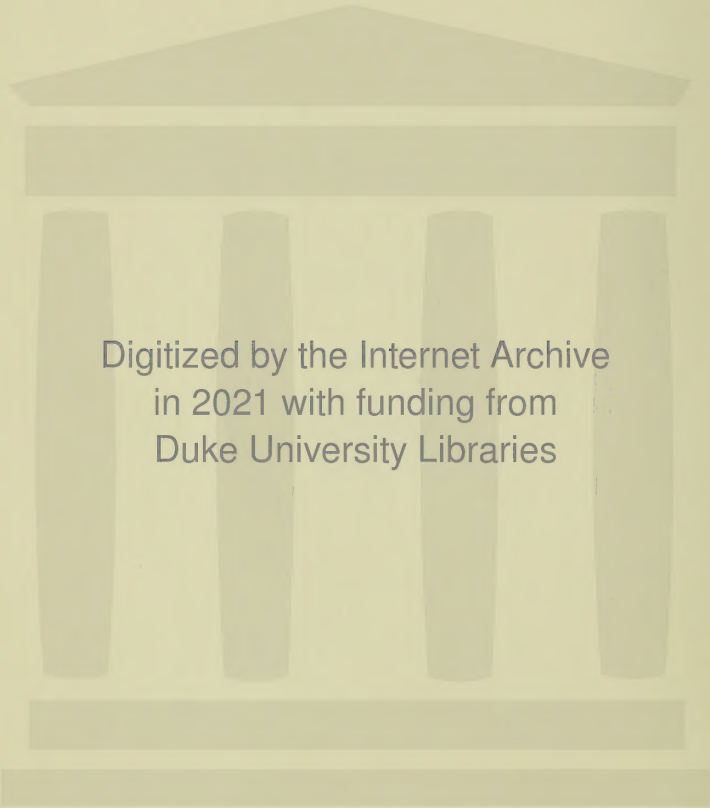
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**Social Class in American Sociology**

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**Milton M. Gordon**

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**American Sociology**

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**to Robert M. MacIver**





## **Editorial Note**

This volume presents a methodological and substantive analysis of the sociological research on the problems of classes and the class structure in American society, for not until after World War I did this field emerge as a major area of research interest among American sociologists.

This late development provides an interesting problem in the sociology of knowledge. The sociocultural context within which American sociology emerged was distinctly unfavorable to all the basic conceptions of such research. The dominant ideology was too firmly grounded in the great intellectual traditions of seventeenth century English liberalism and eighteenth century French rationalism. The inalienable natural rights of man, his essential dignity and equality, and the indefinite if not infinite perfectibility of man and his institutions were written into the Declaration of Independence and given legal status in the Preamble to the Constitution, in the Bill of Rights, and in the Constitutions of the several states. The liberal interpretation of these documents as formulated by Thomas Jefferson and popularized in the Horatio Alger myth found constant reinforcement in the rise of the frontier democracy and its national repercussions upon American political and social thought and policy.

The pioneers of American sociology, although they were in the vanguard of American social scientists in their recognition of

the significance of the class structure and the role of classes in the historical development of human society, assumed that American society had left behind it all hereditarily determined and traditionally defined caste, rank, estate, and class categories, and that it presented no permanent hierarchical social structure. In general, as Charles Hunt Page<sup>1</sup> has said, "they gave voice to class theories which were, in the final analysis, highly colored by the 'classlessness' of the American scene." To many, especially to those who shared Ward's views as to the potential equality of the distribution of human abilities, such social gradations as existed were interpreted as due to such social factors as inequality in the opportunity for education and for the development and exercise of the motivational factors essential to achievement. To them social progress was the socialization of achievement which it was the function of a universal and compulsory public school system to promote. They would have regarded as a repudiation of the American credo the current sociological doctrines that social stratification is a fundamental phenomenon of all social systems, and that differential rewards in terms of income and capital accumulation, with their resultant rank and status relationships, perform essential functions in motivating behavior and distributing natural talents and acquired proficiencies in the production of necessary goods and services.

But the third decade of the twentieth century was to usher in a new climate of opinion. The optimistic liberalism of the western democracies which found expression in the war aims of President Wilson collapsed in the diplomatic failure to implement them in the peace treaties. The widespread disillusionment which followed created a popular market for the literary products of the "debunking school" of American history and biography, and the new school of social cynicism in literature. Among academic sociologists the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia gave new importance to Marxian theory of the class struggle, and the rise of the totalitarianisms of the right in Italy and Germany stimulated their interest in the work of their European colleagues, Max Weber, Sombart, Simmel, Pareto, Mosca, and others, whose academic background and training had rendered them more sensi-

<sup>1</sup> In *Class and American Sociology* (New York: The Dial Press, 1940), p. 250.

tive to the significance of economic factors in the social process. Finally, the depression of the thirties brought into a new focus the significance of many new factors in American life for the restriction of social mobility and the rise of a more rigid stratification of social classes. The more important among these were the passing of the frontier, the decreasing differential fertility among the various social classes, and the possible slowing down of the rate of industrial expansion through the declining birth rate and the recent quota restriction of immigration. The result has been the rise of a new school of stratification theorists whose view of social classes as objectively observable and clearly delineated entities is probably as remote from the actualities of the American scene as was that of their predecessors. There seems to be emerging out of the conflict a new conception of the American class structure which avoids both of these polarities, and which views this situation as consisting of an informal hierarchy of groups with illy defined and highly permeable boundaries, obliquely recognized and spontaneously functioning in the dynamics of social interaction rather than directly perceived and expressed and officially maintained by various institutionalized rituals and procedures.

A perusal of the research monographs analyzed in this volume leads to the conclusion that American sociologists are at present having much the same semantic difficulty with the term social class as St. Augustine experienced with time. "What is time?" he asks, and can only reply, "If no one asks of me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not." In the contribution which it makes to formulating the issues raised by this confusion, to summarizing the results of extant research, and to furnishing a highly articulated system of social class analysis, this volume provides an indispensable base line for future fruitful inquiry.

HOWARD E. JENSEN





## Acknowledgments

It is a pleasant responsibility to express my gratitude and appreciation to those who have contributed to the development of this study. I am particularly grateful to Professor Howard E. Jensen, Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Duke University and Editor of the Sociological Series of which this volume is a part, who has combined warm encouragement with perceptive criticism in optimum proportions, and to Robert M. MacIver, Lieber Professor Emeritus of Political Philosophy and Sociology at Columbia University, who gave esteemed and valuable guidance to this manuscript at an earlier stage and to the writer, generally, in his graduate work at Columbia. My feeling of gratitude toward Professor MacIver is expressed in the dedication of this volume to him.

I am also grateful to Professors Robert K. Merton, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and Robert S. Lynd, of Columbia University, who contributed helpful comments and criticisms to an earlier version of this study.

Professor Charles H. Page of Smith College, whose own investigation of the subject of social class as dealt with by sociologists of an earlier period has been of great value to students in the field, was also good enough to read the manuscript at an earlier point in its development and made numerous helpful suggestions.

I want also to thank Professors E. Digby Baltzell of the University of Pennsylvania and Robert C. James of Haverford College, who confirmed my judgment on a certain point of criticism in the study. I would be just as grateful to them if they had proved me wrong.

Dr. Elbridge Sibley of the Social Science Research Council will be surprised to find his name here since he had no direct connection with this book. However, the high standards of scholarship which he set and displayed personally while a teacher at Bowdoin College made such an impression on this then undergraduate that he has since attempted to follow them. Whatever the success of his efforts, this occasion allows a former pupil to express publicly what (it is of sociological interest to note) can hardly be said privately and directly without embarrassment.

None of these men, of course, is responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation which I may have committed, or is to be considered as necessarily supporting the basic analytical scheme which I have used to deal with the field of social stratification.

Several chapters or portions of chapters in this volume were published first in somewhat different form as articles. I am grateful, respectively, to the journals listed below for permission to use, with appropriate revisions, "Social Class in American Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology*, LV (Nov., 1949), 262-68; and "The Logic of Socio-Economic Status Scales," *Sociometry* (Ed.: J. L. Moreno), XV (Aug.-Nov., 1952), 342-53. Grateful acknowledgment is also made to the following publishers and authors for permission to quote from their copyrighted works: American Sociological Society; Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station; Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc.; Harper and Brothers; Science Research Associates, Inc.; Otis Dudley Duncan; Charles H. Page; and Harold W. Pfautz.

It has been a distinct pleasure to work with Mr. Ashbel G. Brice, Director of the Duke University Press. I cannot imagine anyone with more good-humored patience. At times when my own spirits sagged at the thought of daily tasks to be done and the manuscript lying accusingly unfinished, his letters have both buoyed my perseverance and removed the feelings of guilt which would have made the task more arduous.

Miss Mildred Holmes has typed the final draft of the manuscript with a high degree of skill and care; she has my thanks.

Finally, the aid and comfort given by my wife, Martha Miles Gordon, can hardly be described with adequacy. However, she is not unaware of my gratitude, nor that I have come to have a heightened appreciation of the words of the wise king (it is said) who made his own testimony to uxorial devotion: "Her price is far above rubies. . . . She will do him good all the days of her life."

MILTON M. GORDON

*Wellesley, Massachusetts*  
*September, 1957*





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## **Social Class in American Sociology**



## The Problem

The term "social class"—often shortened to "class"—is used by sociologists to refer to the horizontal stratification of a population by means of factors related in some way to the economic life of the society. Within this general delimitation the concept of class has no precise, well-agreed-upon meaning, but is used either as an omnibus term,<sup>1</sup> designed to designate differences based on wealth, income, occupation, status, community power, group identification, level of consumption, and family background, or by some particular researcher or theorist as resting particularly on some one of these enumerated factors. There is substantial agreement, however, that the stratifications of class are not, by definition, those of race, religion, and nationality background, although the two systems of stratification may be related; and that the concept implies the possibility of at least a minimum amount of movement from one class to another, or, in other words, some vertical social mobility.

Lack of precision or consensus in the use of the term "class" in sociological theory and research and the rapid proliferation of professional monographs using this framework have provided

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, the definition of social class in Henry Pratt Fairchild (ed.), *Dictionary of Sociology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), p. 278; the article "Class," by Paul Mombert in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. E. R. A. Seligman and A. Johnson (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930), III, 531-36, reviews various components of a definition of the term. See, also, any of the standard textbooks in sociology.

an interesting variety of approaches to social class phenomena in contemporary American sociology. But they have failed to produce a substantial body of complementary and comparable research which results in cumulative knowledge about the phenomena themselves and in maximum insight into their nature. It is time, therefore, to take stock to determine the present status of class theory and research, to analyze out the component parts of the problem, and to emerge, if possible, with an integrated theoretical framework for the use of the social class concept as a tool of sociological analysis and research. Such an attempt will be made in this study.<sup>2</sup>

The writings on class of Karl Marx and his followers, since they have played such a large role in bringing the concept to the foreground of attention all over the world, demand early consideration. In the famous nineteenth-century call to revolution, *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels had proclaimed that capitalist society was being transformed into "two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat."<sup>3</sup> The former referred to the modern capitalists, the owners of the means of production, the latter to the "modern working class. . . , a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital."<sup>4</sup> Other segments in capitalist society, i.e., "the lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen. . . , the handicraftsmen and peasants—" were conceived of as a transitional group who would "sink gradually into the proletariat."<sup>5</sup> In the unfinished concluding chapter of *Capital*,<sup>6</sup> Marx added a third class,

<sup>2</sup> Several recent and valuable attempts at such an over-all analytical survey are John F. Cuber and William F. Kenkel, *Social Stratification in the United States* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954); Kurt B. Mayer, *Class and Society*, "Doubleday Short Studies in Sociology," No. 10 (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1955); Bernard Barber, *Social Stratification* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1957); and Joseph A. Kahl, *The American Class Structure* (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1957). The two last-named works appeared after the manuscript of this book was essentially completed and thus do not figure in the analysis attempted here.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, authorized English translation (New York: International Publishers, 1932), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, trans. Ernest Untermann (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1909), III, chap. Iii.



the landlords, whose source of income is ground rent. Nevertheless, in the vast dynamic and sprawling system of Marxist thought and interpretation, including the elaborations and refinements of his followers,<sup>7</sup> this essentially twofold economic-functional description of modern classes as bourgeoisie and proletariat remains the central core of both definition and rallying cry to action.

Class struggle was the rigorous and fundamental law of pre-existing recorded history, according to Marx, and the penultimate act in the historical drama was to be the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the increasingly miserable but militant proletariat, who, under the leadership of a specially prescient vanguard, would destroy capitalism and set up a classless society in which the state would finally, in Engel's classic phrase, "wither away." The analytical underpinnings of the theory of social change which underlay this process were formed by a grafting of Hegel's cyclical "dialectic" onto Feuerbach's "naturalistic materialism," with additions of Marx's own, to produce "dialectical materialism," the Marxist fundamental tool with which to analyze history and interpret society.

While the role of Marxist doctrine and interpretation in stimulating American sociological writings on classes cannot be precisely measured, it is certain that, as intellectual stimulus, as controversial issue, and as foment of revolutionary activity, Marxist analysis has bulked large in the welter of influences which have constituted the intellectual climate in which American sociologists and other social scientists have considered class phenomena. Nevertheless, few American sociologists have presented a scheme of class analysis using Marxist terminology as such, or Marxist revolutionary evocation. The doctrine's secular eschatology, its dogmatism, and its oversimplifications have not lent themselves to the objectivity, precise analytical distinctions, and trend toward multicausal analysis which characterize modern sociological science. On the other hand, it has provided orientations

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, the more closely articulated class delineation in Nikolai Bukharin, *Historical Materialism, A System of Sociology*, authorized translation from the third Russian edition (New York: International Publishers, 1925), particularly chap. viii. For a valuable bibliography on Marx and Marxist controversy, see Donald Drew Egbert, Stow Persons, and T. D. Seymour Bassett, *Socialism and American Life*, Vol. II, *Bibliography: Descriptive and Critical* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1952).

which still influence some sociologists, and it has raised important questions and provided partial insights which no sociologist working in the field of social stratification can ignore.

Charles H. Page has surveyed the treatment and use of the concept of class in early American sociology.<sup>8</sup> In this monograph, he has presented and analyzed class materials in the writings of Lester F. Ward, William Graham Sumner, Albion W. Small, Franklin H. Giddings, Charles Horton Cooley, and E. A. Ross, the "Fathers" of American sociology, as he calls them. The period of the "Fathers" was dominated by large-scale theorizing and analysis rather than by specific empirical research; Page notes the considerable attention paid to the concept and role of class in their work. In general, these early sociologists offered, with varying degrees of emphasis, two concepts of class, one a framework based on economic factors, the other concerned more with the subjective element of status feelings and class consciousness or identification. Page summarizes as follows:

Throughout their [Ward, Sumner, *et al.*] writings appear, though not always clearly expressed, two quite distinct approaches. All of them, at one time or another, used "class" in the generally accepted sense as a group demarcated by *economic* factors: by income, economic function, or relation to a system of production. This conception pushes to a category of secondary importance questions of group cohesion, "consciousness of kind," or class consciousness. These latter phenomena, however, are of primary interest to sociologists, especially to those like Giddings and Cooley who found in the attitudinal relationships of society the very essence of their sociological material. And so a second conception of social class emerged, one based upon the "subjective" elements of group consciousness. Cooley epitomized this conception in declaring that "the relation between the employing and hand-laboring classes is *first of all* a matter of personal attitudes. . . ." Cooley's elaboration of closed class and "caste sentiment" is an analysis based upon the "subjective" approach. Various-ly expressed and with different marks of stress, the same can be said of Ward's extensive plea for the educational upward levelling of the social strata, of Sumner's treatment of the declining middle class and the cohering "proletariat," of Small's criticism of the rigid Marx-ian distinction and his description of "middle class consciousness,"

<sup>8</sup> Charles H. Page, *Class and American Sociology: from Ward to Ross* (New York: The Dial Press, 1940).

of Gidding's emphasis upon consciousness of kind as both a requirement of social class and a factor hindering class formation, and of Ross's stress of *status* as the criterion of class and his Cooley-like distinction between "open" and "closed" classes.<sup>9</sup>

Page, pointing to the necessary limitations of his study and the extensive treatment of Veblen in other monographs and surveys, does not devote a chapter to the work of the pioneer socio-economist Thorstein Veblen.<sup>10</sup> He does, however, deal with Veblen's influence on "the Fathers" and in one case, that of Ward, points out a reciprocal influence. We would observe that Veblen's distinction between the "predatory" or business class, engaged primarily in manipulating pecuniary symbols (in Veblen's analysis an enterprise essentially hostile to production), and the "industrious" or "working" class, which is the genuine producer of goods, falls within the economic framework of class definition. The "institutional" analysis of economic processes with which he virtually devastated the premises to classical economics called into play a cross-cultural view of societal life which he used to great advantage in analyzing behavior attributes of class in his famous *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.<sup>11</sup> In this work, in which Veblen characterized motivations of upper class behavior as "conspicuous leisure" and "conspicuous consumption," he undoubtedly laid the groundwork for a cultural analysis of class behavior. However, there are signs in this monograph of a peculiar psychological interpretation which attributes a great deal more conscious awareness of the behavior process to the participating individuals than a strictly cultural approach would dictate or validate.

The writings of the sociological "Fathers" and of Veblen on class, although they made their way into the textbooks and general treatises in sociology, led directly to no major schools of

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 252-53.

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance: Joseph Dorfman, *Thorstein Veblen and His America* (New York: The Viking Press, 1934); P. T. Homan, *Contemporary Economic Thought* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928), pp. 105-192; W. Jaffee, *Les Theories Economiques et Sociales de Thorstein Veblen* (Paris, 1924); J. A. Hobson, *Veblen* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1937); and, more recently, David Riesman, *Thorstein Veblen, A Critical Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953).

<sup>11</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: The Modern Library, 1934).

class research or theory. American sociology entered its second generation of existence in the middle twenties with "class" established as a necessary concept for the analysis of economic stratification and its possible psychological correlates, but with little class research in progress, a minimum of theoretical consideration of the precise meaning of the term, and practically no recognition of the class framework as a major area of investigation within the discipline of sociology.<sup>12</sup>

This "lull" in attention to class in American sociology offers in itself an interesting problem of interpretation. We may note with Page probable explanations in the existing American ideology that class distinctions, by and large, did not exist in America, in the belief in the existence of virtually unlimited social mobility, and in the distrust of the term itself because of its close association with Marxian and other "foreign" doctrines of revolutionary activity. Also, as a variable not present in an earlier day, there was the inflated economic prosperity of this period, with its consequent visible rise in the living standards of large masses of the population. American social scientists were apparently not unaffected by these ideological and behavioral phenomena in the general population, the cumulative effect of which was calculated to de-emphasize preoccupation with "class."

The recurrence of closer attention to class phenomena in American sociology took place in almost incidental and certainly sporadic fashion in occasional monographs or portions of monographs of the ecological school, then burgeoning forth from its intellectual center, the University of Chicago, and in a compendious work on social mobility by the transplanted European scholar, Sorokin. In 1929, however, the Lynds published their *Middletown*,<sup>13</sup> a frankly defined socio-anthropological study of a Midwestern American community, which had class as one of its analytical components, and in the early thirties, W. Lloyd Warner, the anthropologist, was already at work with a corps of assistants on gathering the data for a completely class-oriented analysis of a New England community. One may note here the growing

<sup>12</sup> See Page, *op. cit.*, ix-xi, for corroborative citations of this point.

<sup>13</sup> Complete bibliographical references for these and other works mentioned in this historical review will be given in later chapters as they appear for analysis.



influence and penetration of the discipline of cultural anthropology into sociological thought. While cultural anthropology, as such, was not class oriented, its focus on research into the total life of a given community lent the framework within which investigators studying complexly organized modern communities would inevitably have to deal with those divisions in the community based on class factors. Moreover, European sociology had from the beginning been heavily influenced by economic concerns and the training in economics of its practitioners. Class analysis in the works of Max Weber, Sombart, Simmel, Pareto, Mosca, and others, along with the continuance of Marxist doctrine and activity, constituted a steady reminder to American sociologists that the topic was an important one and could not be ignored. On the American scene, the development and proliferation of socialist parties and the felt presence of the "third party" coalition during the national election of 1924 undoubtedly stimulated the thinking of American social scientists.<sup>14</sup> Then came the long and devastating economic depression of the thirties, and this enveloping phenomenon, with its repercussions in the governmental remedies of the "New Deal" and the rise of industrial unionism, constituted another major set of influences conducive to growing interest in class phenomena in America. The fruits of all these influences were evident not only in monographs and particularized researches, but in the substantial permeation of the point of view concerning the basic causes of human behavior known as "economic determinism," and in the concern with delineating the "maldistribution" and inequalities of wealth and income in the United States—both of which emphases are markedly apparent in the textbooks of this period.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout the thirties, a growing number of monographs and articles appeared dealing with social class materials, either explicitly using the term, or focusing on such components as "socio-economic status," occupation, educational level, income, amount

<sup>14</sup> See Harry W. Laidler, *Social-Economic Movements* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1945), chap. xxxvii, "Socialism in the United States and Canada," for an account of these developments.

<sup>15</sup> See a recent study of the content of sociology texts of the period 1926-1945: A. H. Hobbs, *The Claims of Sociology: A Critique of Textbooks* (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Stackpole Co., 1951).

of rent, etc. Problems of differential fertility by income or occupation, the measurement of socio-economic status, the relation of the father's occupation to educational opportunities of the child, and other class problems were explored. Articles analyzing the possible meanings of the term "class" indicated growing attention to the subject, and considerations of class divisions within the Negro group made their appearance. In 1937 the Lynds published their second Middletown study, which contained extensive class materials, and the late thirties saw also the publication of separate studies of a Southern community by Dollard and Powdermaker with a "class and caste" focus. In the early forties, the long heralded Yankee City volumes by Warner and associates began to make their appearance.

The decade of the forties, even with the interruption of non-military research brought on by World War II, witnessed a continuation and acceleration of the upward trend in the quantity of research and theory with a class orientation, and the first half of the decade of the fifties has seen the torrent become a veritable flood. Pfautz, in a critique and bibliography of social stratification publications appearing from 1945 to 1952, listed no less than 333 items and called his bibliography incomplete.<sup>16</sup> The first textbook in the subject was published in 1954,<sup>17</sup> and a second appeared soon after.<sup>18</sup> A book of readings became available in 1953.<sup>19</sup> Courses and seminars in social stratification, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, have become increasingly numerous, and the American Sociological Society in its annual meetings has come to devote considerable attention to the field.<sup>20</sup> The area of investigation which may be called *social class* or *social*

<sup>16</sup> Harold W. Pfautz, "The Current Literature on Social Stratification: Critique and Bibliography," *American Journal of Sociology*, LVIII (Jan., 1953), 391-418. For other valuable bibliographies which cover the pre-1945 publications, see W. C. Bailey, N. Foote, P. K. Hatt, R. Hess, R. T. Morris, M. Seeman, and G. Sykes, "Bibliography on Status and Stratification" (New York: Social Science Research Council, no date; mimeographed); D. G. Macrae, "Social Stratification: A Trend Report and Bibliography," *Current Sociology*, II, (1953-54), No. 1; and Egbert, Persons, and Bassett, *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> Cuber and Kenkel, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Mayer, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), *Class, Status and Power* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953).

<sup>20</sup> The American Sociological Society, in its 1955 meetings, devoted no less than four separate sessions to papers on social stratification.



*stratification* could definitely be said to have arrived, by 1955, to the status of a major subdiscipline within the field of American sociology. It is at this point that we propose to begin a retrospective survey and analysis of social class materials in American sociology, dealing with the period following the work of the sociological "Fathers," a period which dates, roughly, from the middle twenties to the time of writing.

This study attempts a contribution to a permanent analytical record of the development of the stratification area in American sociology which would logically follow the Page volume on the earlier era. The materials of the study will consist of a selection of works in American sociology of the time period indicated which explicitly use the class concept, or which deal in a central way with social stratification using component items generally regarded as being within the field of class analysis, such as income, occupation, or social status. The selection will be weighted in the direction of community studies and theoretical statements and critiques on class because these are the materials which have bulked largest in shaping the field as a whole and in raising the pertinent research questions. It will also be weighted in the direction of studies which illustrate main trends of stratification analysis and research. The topic of social mobility will be considered in relation to those studies which fall within the above framework or are of historical interest in the development of the stratification field as a whole. The monographic empirical studies of social mobility, however, will not be included. Their collation and integration with national data on changes in occupational and income distribution well merit a separate volume.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Following is a selected list of social mobility studies and discussions: F. W. Taussig and C. S. Joslyn, *American Business Leaders* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1932); Percy E. Davidson and H. Dewey Anderson, *Occupational Mobility in an American Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1937); Elbridge Sibley, "Some Demographic Clues to Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, VII (June, 1942), 322-30; Richard Centers, "Occupational Mobility of Urban Occupational Strata," *American Sociological Review*, XIII (April, 1948), 197-203; Carson McGuire, "Social Stratification and Mobility Patterns," *American Sociological Review*, XV (April, 1950), 195-204; Gideon Sjoberg, "Are Social Classes in America Becoming More Rigid?" *American Sociological Review*, XVI (Dec., 1951), 775-83; Seymour M. Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, "Social Mobility and Occupational Career Patterns. I. Stability of Jobholding," *American Journal of Sociology*,

The primary focus will be methodological and analytical and aimed at developing a consistent and fruitful conceptual scheme for the analysis of stratification data. Substantive materials will frequently be dealt with in detail, however, partly for informational purposes and partly in order to develop and sharpen the conceptual analysis. A classification of materials has been made, based wherever possible on major "schools" of class research, and otherwise on scope and subject matter of the writing. Each division of this classification will be analyzed in a separate chapter. The divisions are as follows:

1. Analytical Procedures—The Multidimensional Approach: Weber and others
2. Class in the Middle 1920's
  - a. The Ecological School
  - b. Sorokin's *Social Mobility*
3. The Lynds—The Middletown Studies
4. The Warner Studies
5. Other Community Studies: Dollard, Powdermaker, West, Hollingshead, Kaufman, Duncan and Artis, Mills, Goldschmidt, and others.
6. Problem Areas in Theory and Research
7. The Logic of Socio-Economic Status and Occupational Rating Scales

The final chapter will present the writer's "system of social class analysis" based on the analytical survey of the foregoing materials.

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LVII (Jan., 1952), 366-74, "Social Mobility and Occupational Career Patterns. II. Social Mobility," *American Journal of Sociology*, LVII (March, 1952), 494-504, and "Ideological Equalitarianism and Social Mobility in the United States," *Transactions of the Second World Congress of Sociology*, Vol. II (London: International Sociological Association, 1954), 34-54; August B. Hollingshead, "Trends in Social Stratification: A Case Study," *American Sociological Review*, XVII (Dec., 1952), 679-86; Natalie Rogoff, *Recent Trends in Occupational Mobility* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953); William Petersen, "Is America Still the Land of Opportunity?" *Commentary*, XVI (Nov., 1953), 477-86; Stuart Adams, "Trends in Occupational Origins of Business Leaders," *American Sociological Review*, XIX (Oct., 1954), 541-48; Ely Chinoy, "Social Mobility Trends in the United States," *American Sociological Review*, XX (April, 1955), 180-86; S. M. Miller, "The Concept of Mobility," *Social Problems*, III (Oct., 1955), 65-73; W. Lloyd Warner and James C. Abegglen, *Occupational Mobility in American Business and Industry, 1928-1952* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), and *Big Business Leaders in America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955).

## Analytical Procedures

The following set of questions, or analytical framework, is proposed for a full-scale analysis of any given class study, although the necessary limitations in the scope of this work will preclude using the entire framework for the analysis of each division.

1. *Definition.* What is the definition of class used? This question must obviously be central to our inquiry since its answer defines both the subject matter and the necessary techniques of investigation. Words and definitions are essentially only arbitrary ways of referring to realities, but until there is a concerted agreement on what those realities are and what terms will consistently be used to refer to them, we are short of the necessary goals of the scientist.

At the present time there is no general agreement among sociologists as to what factor or combination of factors delineates a "social class." All concur in the view that the concept of class deals with the stratification of a population into higher and lower categories, but whether this stratification is to be considered as based on income, occupation, status feelings, community power, cultural difference, or a combination of these, and to what extent separate group life is indicated by the term, are questions on which there is no substantial agreement.

The most promising theoretical development of the past few years has been the increasing recognition of the range of alternative factors in stratification and their possible relationships and combinations. This may be labeled the *multidimensional approach* to class phenomena.

The multidimensional approach to stratification in its present form has its origin in the work of the German sociologist Max Weber, who, in a brief essay published posthumously in the early twenties,<sup>22</sup> perceptively pointed out two important considerations: (a) that there are several dimensions of stratification

<sup>22</sup> Translated in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (trans. and eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), as "Class, Status, Party," pp. 180-95. See also another pertinent essay by Weber which appears in English in A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (trans.), *Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 424-29.

which must be kept analytically distinct, and (b) that a person's positions in these separate dimensions are not necessarily identical and are frequently disparate. Weber distinguishes the dimensions of economic position, social status, and "power." Persons who have the same economic position have the same "life chances," that is, the same opportunity to obtain goods and services in the market and thus life experiences which depend on market considerations. Aggregates of persons with the same life chances are called "classes." The social status dimension is concerned with a "social estimation of *honor*." Persons who share the same "honor," or prestige, constitute "communities" (often "amorphous") called "status groups." The relationship between class and status group, though always dynamic, may vary: "Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity." On the other hand, "status honor need not necessarily be linked with a 'class situation.' On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property."<sup>23</sup> Weber's third dimension of "power" is not so clearly conceptualized as the other two. Occupying this dimension are "parties," which "may exist in a social 'club' as well as in a 'state.'" The action of parties is "oriented toward the acquisition of social 'power,' that is to say, toward influencing a communal action no matter what its content may be."<sup>24</sup> This seems to restrict the concept to an area where organized interest groups compete. However, in an earlier part of the essay, power is defined as "the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action."<sup>25</sup> This seems to allow for individual position (and action) in the power dimension as well as group or "party" position. In his insistence on "status groups," too, Weber appears to beg the question of whether status is distributed group-wise or individually along an unbroken continuum.

Weber notes that status groups are characterized by a "style of life," and that restrictions on social interaction in such areas

<sup>23</sup> Gerth and Mills (trans. and eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, p. 187.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.



as marriage and intervisitation are likely to arise between status levels. He also discusses the development of ethnic and caste segregation out of status considerations. Thus, in this germinal essay, Weber created an analytical framework which distinguished many of the fundamental variables in stratification which American sociologists, a generation later, were to grapple with empirically and conceptually.

The acceptance of the multidimensional approach and its elaboration and further clarification proceeded slowly but with gradually accelerated speed. Certain aspects of it are suggested in Sorokin's analysis in the late twenties (considered in Chapter II). Mills, in a well-known review of Volume I of the Yankee City Series in 1942, used it as the basis of an attack on the Warner analytical scheme.<sup>26</sup> Benoit-Smullyan's conceptual analysis in 1944 made cogent use of a multidimensional scheme similar to Weber's although the full implications in terms of class definition were not perceived.<sup>27</sup> Kaufman, in 1947, suggested that alternative factors in stratification should be examined for their value in behavior prediction.<sup>28</sup> Shils, following Weber, used a multidimensional approach in his analysis of stratification materials in American sociology in 1948.<sup>29</sup> In 1949 Gordon called attention to the need for a conceptual separation of stratification variables and the empirical study of their relationships, presenting a preliminary analysis of pertinent variables.<sup>30</sup> The same writer provided a full-scale multidimensional treatment in a paper published in 1951.<sup>31</sup>

Pfautz and Duncan,<sup>32</sup> Kornhauser,<sup>33</sup> Hatt,<sup>34</sup> Lipset and Ben-

<sup>26</sup> C. Wright Mills, review of W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, in *American Sociological Review*, VII (April, 1942), 263-71.

<sup>27</sup> Emile Benoit-Smullyan, "Status, Status Types, and Status Inter-relations," *American Sociological Review*, IX (April, 1944), 151-61.

<sup>28</sup> Harold F. Kaufman, *Prestige Classes in a New York Rural Community*, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Memoir 260 (March, 1944), p. 42.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Shils, *The Present State of American Sociology* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1948), pp. 17-25.

<sup>30</sup> Milton M. Gordon, "Social Class in American Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology*, LV (Nov., 1949), 262-68.

<sup>31</sup> Milton M. Gordon, "A System of Social Class Analysis," *Drew University Studies*, No. II (Aug., 1951).

<sup>32</sup> Harold W. Pfautz and Otis Dudley Duncan, "A Critical Evaluation of

dix,<sup>35</sup> Mayer,<sup>36</sup> and Cuber and Kenkel<sup>37</sup> are among others who have supported the multidimensional approach to stratification in the past few years. In fact, the entire period under review may be seen as one in which social class theorists were gradually and with increasing precision engaged in the process of making analytical distinctions among the numerous factors or variables which may be subsumed under the rubric of social stratification.<sup>38</sup> Thus the multidimensional approach itself may be seen as part of an analytical operation which is fundamental to all research and scientific understanding: the specification of variables inherent in a given problem area.<sup>39</sup>

Here is another way of stating the problem. The population of a given community may be stratified more or less objectively on the basis of one factor, such as income. If the investigator obtains such data, and then arbitrarily assigns the term "class" to divisions of this continuum of incomes, he is at least, so far, being consistent. His additional tasks are (a) to show whether his points of division have any particular significance in terms of indicating group rather than individual differences; (b) to demonstrate how the factor of income is correlated with other single factors such as occupation, status, power, educational attainment, etc.; (c) to reveal to what extent social relationships are determined and demarcated by these income divisions; and (d) to relate income divisions to cultural behavior.

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Warner's Work in Community Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, XV (April, 1950), 205-15.

<sup>35</sup> Arthur Kornhauser, "Public Opinion and Social Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, LV (Jan., 1950), 333-45.

<sup>36</sup> Paul K. Hatt, "Stratification in the Mass Society," *American Sociological Review*, XV (April, 1950), 216-22.

<sup>37</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, "Social Status and Social Structure: A Re-examination of Data and Interpretations, II," *British Journal of Sociology*, II (Sept., 1951), 230-54.

<sup>38</sup> Kurt Mayer, "The Theory of Social Classes," *Harvard Educational Review*, XXIII (Summer, 1953), 149-67. See also his *Class and Society*, *cit. supra*.

<sup>39</sup> John F. Cuber and William F. Kenkel, *op. cit.*

<sup>38</sup> Many of these contributions will be considered in chap. vi.

<sup>39</sup> For a cogent discussion of one type of specification of variables in research operation—that which distinguishes variables which condition the relationship of two other variables—see Patricia L. Kendall and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Problems of Survey Analysis," in *Continuities in Social Research: Studies in the Scope and Method of "The American Soldier,"* ed. Robert K. Merton and Paul F. Lazarsfeld (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1950), pp. 133-96.



Another investigator may study the same community, using a definition of class based on status ascription. Again, assuming that his status stratification of the population has been accurately made, he must justify his selection of points of division of the status continuum to form classes, show how status is related to income, occupation, education, etc., and indicate what effect status has on social relationships. As before, there has been an arbitrary assignment of the term "class" to one factor, and an analysis of the relationship of this factor to the other factors which stratify a population or are dynamically related to stratification. The point of emphasis in these remarks, so far, is the need for the consideration of the existence of alternative factors of stratification and the relationship of all these factors to each other.

It will inevitably occur to the theorist or investigator that, possibly, the term "class," instead of being applied to one of the factors or variables, may be applied to a particular combination or constellation of them. The danger here is in the too easy and inviting opportunity to construct patterns and indices which appear logically consistent but only partially fit the realities of the social situation. To put together variables such as income, education, occupation, and status into a conceptual whole and apply the term "class" to this construct should mean that the construct has social reality in the life of the community. If it does, then it will reveal itself empirically in the actual social divisions of the community. If it does not delineate such divisions, then the construct is an artificial one. Such being the case, it might be of considerably greater value to search for the social divisions in the first place. Indices, and combinations of factors put together in the researcher's mind, might then be presumed to have predictive value rather than to stand for the social reality itself.

Accordingly, we have set up in preliminary fashion a list of theoretically discrete alternative variables, or factors, which are pertinent to stratification analysis. This system of variables will be used as a framework for the consideration of social class materials dealt with in succeeding chapters. The last chapter will reformulate them into a "system of social class analysis" based on changes and refinements suggested by their application to the materials themselves. The list follows.

A. STRATIFICATION VARIABLES: those which refer by their very nature to hierarchical arrangement:

1. *Economic power*

a. Income and wealth.

b. Occupation—relationship to the means of production.<sup>40</sup>

2. *Status ascription*

a. *Corporate class-consciousness*<sup>41</sup>—definite feeling of common class membership and interests, with unhesitating ascription of superior and inferior status to clearly demarcated classes above and below; usually associated with attitudes of implicit or explicit protest on the part of the lower classes.

b. *Generalized class awareness*—generalized, diffuse, and often obliquely phrased feelings of the existence of status differentials by groups, and one's own participation in one of these status levels.

c. *Competitive class feeling*<sup>42</sup>—individualized status ascription and competitive feeling with little or no sense of group participation or identification.

3. *Political power*—conceived broadly here as power to manipulate people through either the formal governing process or the control of opinion-forming agencies of the community.

B. ASSOCIATED VARIABLES: behavior categories which are not, in themselves, hierarchical but which are produced by the operation of stratification variables and which, in turn, contribute to the dynamics of stratification.

1. *Group life*—A very important question is to what degree the factors of class stratification singly or in combination produce stratification of group life. In other words, is a class, however defined, an *effective social system* within which the class member has most or all of his intimate and meaningful social contacts, and whose other members have relatively equal access to him and his family members in clique, associational, and institutional relationships? If this proves consistently to be the case, an important aspect will have been added to the concept of class. From this point of view, classes would con-

<sup>40</sup> Theoretically, it would be possible for occupations to exist on a nonhierarchical basis. In most societies, however, major occupational functions carry hierarchical implications.

<sup>41</sup> See R. M. MacIver, *Society* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1937), p. 174.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

stitute a stratified set of empirically operative social systems, however reluctantly and obliquely recognized and admitted by their participants. The possibility of the existence of an ecological residential base to this hierarchy of social systems would also have to be investigated.

2. *Cultural attributes*—Do the various classes, however defined, display consistently different patterns of behavior and attitudes which may be attributed to their participation in differentially privileged cultural subgroups within the national culture? Patterns of consumption, dress, speech, and participation in community life, attitudes and patterns relating to focal points of interest in the culture such as sex, morality, religion, the family, patriotism, education, the arts, sports, etc. offer possible points of cultural differentiation by class. The interesting and difficult question arises here of to what extent these differences, insofar as they exist, become internalized psychological elements of the personality pattern of the respective class members. Crucial to this area, also, is the question of “life chances” as evidenced by mortality and sickness rates, patterns of health care, and nutrition and shelter.

II. *Ascertainment*. Once the definition of class has been decided upon by a given researcher and the other pertinent variables distinguished, he has the problem of applying the definition in his community or “universe” to distinguish the membership of the respective classes. This process of actually determining who belongs to what class, however defined, may be called *ascertainment*. If the definition is primarily an economic one, has the researcher secured data on incomes, property ownership, and savings? If it is in terms of status, have his interviews actually revealed these status awarenesses on the part of the respondents, how they are phrased, and how much agreement there is concerning the status levels and who belongs to them? If he claims the existence of integrated group life by class levels, has he shown how this actually operates in clique, associational, and family memberships? If he posits cultural differences in behavior and attitudes, has he enumerated these differences as obtained by observation and interviews?

III. *Social Mobility*. The concept of class embraces the idea

of the existence of some vertical social mobility—that is, movement up or down the various stratification dimensions. How much vertical social mobility, upwards or downwards, is indicated by the various researchers into class phenomena, in what dimensions of stratification does it take place, and what are the techniques by which such mobility is effected? What are the factors which make mobility difficult or which facilitate it?

IV. *Ethnic Stratification.* Sociologists are generally agreed that two major systems of social stratification cut across American society. One is a system of stratification based on power and status considerations related to economic and occupational factors, which may be labeled social class; the other is based on differences of race, religion, or national background, or, to use a convenient summary term, ethnic group. A very interesting and crucial question is how these two systems are related. Do social class similarities tend to obliterate the divisions along ethnic lines? Do the varying ethnic groups have differing degrees of social class differentiation? Are the standards of class differentiation the same for all ethnic groups? Do the differing social classes within the ethnic group still tend to remain *within* the ethnic group as far as effective social systems are concerned? These are some of the questions which the sociologist of class must deal with in this area, and they are complicated by the obvious possibility that the answers may differ for each ethnic group considered.

The above four sets of questions and their subdivisions will be used as the major tools for the subsequent analysis of class materials in American sociology of the period 1925-1955. At the conclusion of the study some light should be thrown on the problems of research in class stratification and the possibility of a consensus on the meaning of the term "social class" in the expository writings of American sociologists.



## The Middle Twenties

### The Ecological School

During the middle and late 1920's, American sociology saw the rise of an influential school of theorists and researchers who concerned themselves with an intensive analysis of problems and phenomena of city life, especially the way in which these problems and phenomena were differentially distributed over various areas of the city. Frankly borrowing terms and concepts from the fields of plant and animal ecology, and synthesizing these borrowings with findings from distributive economics and studies of land values, the sociologists who operated within this framework referred to themselves as students of human ecology, and their researches and publications have been subsumed under the label of "The Ecological School." Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and R. D. McKenzie, the first two teaching at the University of Chicago, contributed most of the theoretical formulations of the school,<sup>1</sup> and students of these men contrib-

<sup>1</sup>See particularly Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and R. D. McKenzie, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925); Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921); Ernest W. Burgess (ed.), *The Urban Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926); R. D. McKenzie, *The Neighborhood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923), and *The Metropolitan Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1933). For a more extensive bibliography of ecological theory, consult Milla Aissa Alihan, *Social Ecology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), unnumbered pages following p. 252. Park's papers on human ecology and the city have recently been reprinted in the collection, Robert Ezra Park, *Human Communities* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1952).

uted a series of research monographs using ecological concepts and dealing, in the main, with problems of urban living in the city of Chicago. Ecological monographs and writings appeared throughout the late twenties and early thirties, and even later, but the basic formulations of this school of analysis were a product of the 1920's.

The school's period of major influence was over by the time of the outbreak of World War II, probably as a result of causes which included a devastating attack on its theoretical assumptions by Alihan,<sup>2</sup> empirical invalidation or substantial modification of some of its research hypotheses,<sup>3</sup> the death of McKenzie, and Park's retirement from the professional writing scene.<sup>4</sup> Although many of its research accomplishments have consistently been recognized as worthwhile sociological contributions and some of its techniques are still in use, and two major restatements of the field of human ecology appeared in 1950,<sup>5</sup> its former position as a major "school" has never been restored. Some of its research concerns were embraced in the burgeoning interest in social stratification, and it seems scarcely to have been noticed in the rush of attention to studies of the total community that the work of the ecologists is relevant to social class analysis for both its accomplishments and its failures in this area.

While, strictly speaking, the ecological framework was not designed to deal directly with social *structure*, focusing rather on

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> See Maurice R. Davie, "The Pattern of Urban Growth," in *Studies in the Science of Society*, George P. Murdock (ed.) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), pp. 133-61; W. Wallace Weaver, *West Philadelphia: A Study of Natural Social Areas* (Philadelphia: privately published, 1930); Homer Hoyt, *The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods in American Cities* (Washington, D. C.: Federal Housing Administration, 1939); J. Ellis Voss, *Summer Resort: An Ecological Analysis of a Satellite Community* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1941); for later studies, see Paul Hatt, "The Concept of Natural Area," *American Sociological Review*, XI (Aug., 1946), 423-27; Walter Firey, *Land Use in Central Boston* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947); and William H. Form, "The Place of Social Structure in the Determination of Land Use: Some Implications for a Theory of Urban Ecology," *Social Forces*, XXXII (May, 1954), 317-23.

<sup>4</sup> See August B. Hollingshead, "Community Research: Development and Present Condition," *American Sociological Review*, XIII (April, 1948), 140-41, for a brief exposition of the above.

<sup>5</sup> James A. Quinn, *Human Ecology* (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1950); Amos H. Hawley, *Human Ecology, a Theory of Community Structure* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1950).



*area* and *process*, materials pertinent to social class inquiry abound throughout the works of this school. Some of these materials stem from the ecological formulations themselves, as when, for instance, various areas of the city are differentiated in terms of amount of rentals; others appear when standard techniques of social analysis, not peculiarly ecological, are used in many of the monographs which the ecologists produced. One must certainly be careful in scrutinizing class materials in the works of the ecologists to keep in mind that, on the whole, this school did not claim to be a school of class analysis. Nevertheless, it is not too much to suggest that both the merits and demerits of the ecological framework in dealing with human phenomena became apparent in an analysis of its degree of success in clarifying the role of class factors in American urban life.

### Ecological Theory

Alihan<sup>6</sup> has performed the useful service of collating and analyzing formal statements of ecological theory. With ample documentation she demonstrates that ecological researches were often only partially and tenuously related to ecological theory, that the ecological theorists differed among themselves in the use and meaning of terms, and that the same theorists often used the same term in differing ways at different times. Nevertheless, a persistent core of ecological assumptions and techniques which gives some unity to the school's work is observable. We shall deal first with the relation of ecological theory to class analysis.

The root distinction in ecological theory is that between "community" and "society."<sup>7</sup> Community is conceived of as that substructure of human interaction in which people compete for sustenance in much the same fashion as do plants and animals, apart from communication and cultural influences; whereas society represents the social or cultural order where communication, custom, habit, folkways, and mores hold sway. Community is the province of the study of human ecology, while analysis of society falls to the lot of the sociologist. Park explains that:

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> See Alihan, *op. cit.*, chap. ii.

. . . human society, as distinguished from plant and animal society, is organized on two levels, the biotic and the cultural. There is a symbiotic society based on competition and a cultural society based on communication and consensus. . . .<sup>8</sup>

Burgess, in a commentary on Park's theory, points out that: The study of the community as the natural resultant of the competitive process constitutes the field of human ecology. The study of society as the result of the cultural processes is represented by the field of social psychology.<sup>9</sup>

By definition, ecology is restricted from dealing with the social-psychological attributes of human interaction: thus when competition is conscious, it takes on the nature of conflict, and becomes a process of "society." It follows from this that such a crucial concept to class theory as "status" is, strictly speaking, excluded from ecological analysis. "Community" is composed of "individuals," whereas "society" consists of "persons," that is, individuals who have acquired "status" in a social grouping. The individual is conceived of as a kind of natural man competing and struggling for existence in a free state of nature. In society, the individual acquires status and membership in a social organization, and modifies his struggle for existence in accordance with the mores and folkways of the collective order, but this is outside the scope of human ecology.<sup>10</sup>

The competitive process, peculiar to community, affects the territorial distribution of utilities, physical structures, and populations. Thus the ecologist has a peculiar concern with factors of space and area. According to one definition, "Human ecology is the modern name for the study which analyzes the processes involved in the spatial and temporal distribution of human beings and their institutions."<sup>11</sup> Competition is also held to be responsible for the occupational distribution of the population. It is conceded by the ecologists that competition may sometimes

<sup>8</sup> Robert E. Park, "Human Ecology," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII (July, 1936), 13; quoted in Alihan, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Ernest W. Burgess, unpublished article on Park; quoted in Alihan, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> See Alihan, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>11</sup> C. A. Dawson, "Sources and Methods of Human Ecology," in *The Fields and Methods of Sociology*, ed. L. L. Bernard (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1934), p. 286; quoted in Alihan, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

have a "cooperative" aspect as, for instance, when Chicago's several million residents share in the receipt of public utility services. But this kind of economic co-operation is held to be an impersonal process without sentiment. To it, the ecologists apply the borrowed term "symbiosis."

Finally, "community" is regarded by ecologists as the "natural order" and competition as the fundamental and natural process of human interaction, whereas society and societal processes are apparently considered as being a kind of artificial superstructure which, with more or less success, modifies to a limited extent the "natural" base of community and competition.<sup>12</sup> There are many hints that this natural base should be regarded as representing the fundamental causal determinants of the less natural structure and processes of society, and that the physical, economic, and spatial aspects of life—again, existing in community—may be used as indices of phenomena in society.

Taking stock thus far of the relationship of ecological theory to class analysis, it is clear that a rigid adherence to the principle confining the field of human ecology to "community" and "competition," as the ecologists defined these terms, would severely restrict the researcher into class phenomena. It would prevent him from studying status attitudes and relationships, aspects of group life, cultural behavior attributes, political aspects, and, indeed, all of the phenomena attendant on the relationships of human beings to one another in "society." As a matter of fact, it is doubtful that a full analysis of economic factors could be made within this framework when it is considered how intimately interwoven are economic strivings with the cultural and psychological motivations of man. Certainly, an analysis of economic life in the United States in terms of a struggle for existence taking place below the level of human consciousness, communication, and learned behavior would do little justice to the complexities of even the economic processes alone.

The artificiality of the distinction made by the ecologists between "community" and "society," and their respective processes, was duly noted by Alihan, and later in a re-examination of ecological theory by Hollingshead, who pointed out that:

<sup>12</sup> See Alihan, *op. cit.*, chap. iii.

. . . human activities are organized within a sociocultural framework, and ecological analysis needs to face this fundamental fact . . . [thus] competition in human society is regulated by the prevailing institutions, beliefs, values, and usages of the society rather than vice versa, which appears to be the position ecologists who have followed the Parkian tradition have taken.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the distinction is one which the research monographs of the ecological school were, almost without exception, unable to maintain. If ecologists had confined themselves to "community," the various phenomena of social disorganization which they studied in Chicago would have been excluded, by definition, from the scope of their subject matter.

In attempting to use the "ecological" factors of economic competition, physical surroundings, and space as either causal agents or indices of societal phenomena, the ecologists also step into the domain of the socio-cultural world. The emphasis on the primacy of economic forces leads naturally to an interpretation of social processes in terms of "economic determinism." This point of view, however, receives varying support in the ecological research monographs, and perhaps it is most closely adhered to in the theoretical formulations of Park, who makes the claim (in a somewhat biological framework) that:

Human ecology, in approaching the study of society from the aspect presented by its biotic substructure, assumes that the origin of social change, if one could trace it to its source, would be found in the struggle for existence and in the growth, the migration, the mobility, and the territorial and occupational distribution of peoples which this struggle has brought about.<sup>14</sup>

The ecological assumption that "competition" and a competitive struggle for existence represent the "natural order" and the natural state of man is, of course, reminiscent of a number of philosophical and scientific systems which have developed in

<sup>13</sup> A. B. Hollingshead, "A Re-Examination of Ecological Theory," *Sociology and Social Research*, XXXI (Jan.-Feb., 1947), 197. See, also, for an excellent analysis of the inadequacy of the traditional ecological approach to even so basically an "ecological" phenomenon as land use, William H. Form, "The Place of Social Structure in the Determination of Land Use: Some Implications for a Theory of Urban Ecology," *Social Forces*, XXXII (May, 1954), 317-23.

<sup>14</sup> Robert E. Park, "Succession, an Ecological Concept," *American Sociological Review*, I (April, 1936), 178; quoted in Alihan, *op. cit.*, p. 100.



Western thought, including Thomas Hobbes's "state of nature" postulates and Social Darwinism. Of more pertinence to class analysis is the similarity of these assumptions to the premises of the school of classical economics represented by Adam Smith, Ricardo, Bentham, *et al.*—a school of economic thought to which free enterprise capitalism looks for its intellectual and philosophical justification. Indeed, we find Park and Burgess frankly equating ecology with free enterprise in the statement that "The economic organization of society, so far as it is an effect of free competition, is an ecological organization."<sup>15</sup>

As we shall demonstrate later, the fruits of this equation are interestingly realized in the ecological research monographs dealing with social disorganization in Chicago, in which the dynamics of the economic system, in which are found the "slum" and the "deteriorated area," are never inspected or analyzed. To put it another way, poverty and its attendant phenomena are interpreted as being the result of "natural processes" rather than power relationships.

The ecological "processes" play a large role in ecological theory. "By ecological process is meant the tendency in time toward special forms of spatial and sustenance groupings of the units comprising an ecological distribution."<sup>16</sup> Involved in these processes are both human beings and inanimate structures such as buildings and business concerns. No distinction is made between them. All of these elements compete for the most advantageous spatial position, and the resultant ecological processes are referred to as concentration, centralization, segregation, invasion, and succession.<sup>17</sup> As Alihan points out, the distinction between some of the concepts as, for instance, concentration and centralization, or invasion and succession, is neither clear nor consistently adhered to. Of special interest for class analysis is "segregation," by which the ecologists designate the process which places population groups and types of physical structures and concerns in various areas of the city.

As to the forces which produce this segregation, while eco-

<sup>15</sup> *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, p. 508.

<sup>16</sup> R. D. McKenzie, "The Scope of Human Ecology," in *The Urban Community*, ed. Ernest W. Burgess, p. 172; quoted in Alihan, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>17</sup> See Alihan, *op. cit.*, chap. vi.

conomic forces are emphasized, these are variously expressed. Burgess stresses the physical and topographical elements of the area as selective factors, Wirth focuses on land values, Zorbaugh and Park admit the role of cultural influences, and McKenzie emphasizes economic level and type of service. These forces segregate the population and business and industrial concerns into "natural areas" of the city. Often, the area itself is asserted to be a selective force: "From the mobile competing stream of the city's population each natural area of the city tends to collect the particular individuals predestined to it."<sup>18</sup>

The investigation of residential segregation on an economic basis is certainly an essential part of class analysis, and ecological theory may be credited with lending an impetus to such study. However, the indiscriminate grouping of people and inanimate objects such as building types and business concerns blunts this tool somewhat in the hands of the ecologists. Moreover, insofar as they fail to give any systematic place in their theory to forces other than economic in the residential distribution of the population, the ecologists are only partially equipped to deal with this phenomenon, for the factor of ethnic choice is, logically, not a part of the ecological system. And, again, it must be pointed out that in their general treatment of processes, the tendency to animate physical structures and areas and to characterize the processes as "natural," without any investigation of the socio-economic complex in which they operate, has the effect of obscuring the actual dynamic relationships among people which, in the last analysis, motivate the processes. As Alihan remarks:

Because of their physical aspect we would expect a description of the actual movement of the flow, as it were, of these processes. Instead, we are given a series of external indices of each process in terms of space and time. We are left to infer the character of the process, of the impulses which dominate it, of the changing currents. . . . The ecologists have not yet dealt with ecological processes beyond the descriptive phase. They are presented to us like a series of snapshots, from different angles, which can be given a mechanical

<sup>18</sup> Harvey W. Zorbaugh, "The Natural Areas of the City," in *The Urban Community*, ed. Ernest W. Burgess, p. 223; quoted in Alihan, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

animation, but which do not exhibit the real internal continuity of the process they represent.<sup>19</sup>

In this type of analysis, the power relationships and the socio-economic complex which produce class phenomena are, largely, by-passed.

We have noted before the ecologists' special concern with *areas* of the city. Area study may, in fact, be regarded as the ecologists' major empirical research technique. In ecological theory, these differentiated areas of the city come about as the end product of ecological processes and are subject to change with the on-going of these processes.

Three crucial concepts in the ecological study of areas are the zone, the natural area, and the gradient.<sup>20</sup> The zonal pattern of the city was first explicitly formulated by Burgess, although McKenzie had made some note of the phenomenon in his Columbus, Ohio, study. According to Burgess, the city, unless modified by factors of topography, tends to expand radially in a fashion which may be represented ideally by a series of concentric circles around the business section. The areas within these circles eventually constitute distinct zones characterized by particular land use and population types. Zone I is the central business district, with few residents. Zone II, the "Zone of Deterioration" or "Zone of Transition" (because it is in the process of change from a residential to a business and industrial section), contains the immigrant slums, the cheap rooming houses, and the vice and crime hangouts and resorts. Zone III, the "Zone of Workingmen's Homes," is usually an area of second immigrant settlement; "its boundaries have been roughly determined by the plotting of the two-flat dwelling . . . the father works in the factory. . . ."<sup>21</sup> Zone IV is "The Zone of Better Residences" or "The Residential Zone." Here reside "the great middle classes of native-born Americans . . . , small business men, professional people, clerks, and salesmen."<sup>22</sup> Zone V is the commuters' zone, a suburban area

<sup>19</sup> Alihan, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-37.

<sup>20</sup> See Alihan, *op. cit.*, chap. viii.

<sup>21</sup> Ernest W. Burgess, "Urban Areas," in *Chicago: An Experiment in Social Science Research*, ed. T. V. Smith and Leonard D. White (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), p. 116; quoted in Alihan, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

<sup>22</sup> Ernest W. Burgess, "Urban Areas," p. 116; quoted in Alihan, *op. cit.*, p. 217.



where "residence . . . implies an economic rating sufficient to acquire a bungalow costing more than a stipulated minimum figure and an automobile of commensurate rank."<sup>23</sup>

This zonal picture offered by Burgess, presumably on the basis of general observation in the city of Chicago, makes a complete and simple identification of area with the respective residences of social classes, the classes being determined by economic, occupational, and ethnic factors, in what relative proportions we are not told.

Within the zones are the "natural areas." Alihan points out that "Perhaps no other concept of the ecological theory has been subject to such divergence of interpretation, such a variety of classifications."<sup>24</sup> Since these "natural areas" are variously described by different ecologists as being based, in turn, on economic, occupational, cultural, political, racial, physical, topographical, and other factors, one is at a loss to know whose interpretation to follow. Perhaps the common denominator definition extracted by Eubank for his dictionary of sociological concepts best illustrates the lack of agreed-upon specificity of the term: "a section within a larger territory (usually within a city) in which there is some characteristic so outstanding and distinctive that it constitutes a designation by which the vicinity may be tersely and graphically designated and to some extent described."<sup>25</sup> Weaver, in a report on an empirical study of a section of Philadelphia, has questioned the accuracy and usefulness of the term.<sup>26</sup>

The interpretation of the natural area in ecological theory which has most significance for social class research is that which conceives of it as a residential unit having a relatively homogeneous population insofar as economic level and possibly ethnic background are concerned. The major difficulty here is the question of the accuracy of such a concept. If advanced as a hypothesis, it is a legitimate one which may profitably be investigated. This was substantially Weaver's procedure, and he concedes that

<sup>23</sup> Ernest W. Burgess, "Residential Segregation in American Cities," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, CXL (Nov., 1928), 108.

<sup>24</sup> Alihan, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

<sup>25</sup> Earle Eubank, *The Concepts of Sociology* (New York: D. C. Heath and Co., 1932), p. 376; quoted in Alihan, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-31.

<sup>26</sup> W. Wallace Weaver, *op. cit.*

"There are regions which have a peculiar concentration of aged persons, children, Negroes, foreign born, or home owners." But "the difficulty with these criteria for mapping out natural areas lies in the gradation of the particular index from districts of concentration to those of normally expected or sub-normal occurrence . . . [thus] there appears to be no uniformly satisfactory index for dividing the region into homogeneous population groups."<sup>27</sup>

In other words, given areas and social systems do not necessarily coincide. This illustrates the main difficulty of the ecological approach based on area study. Committed to the primacy of the area concept as a tool of analysis, the ecologists were necessarily forced to assume a perfect coincidence of area with homogeneous population groups forming a social system. Instead of beginning with population groups identified by economic and social similarities and studying their differential behavior characteristics and their territorial distribution, they began at the other end with area, and were forced by the nature of their approach to equate these areas with social uniformities of the people who occupied them. To the extent that social systems and areas do coincide, their researches were productive in demonstrating behavior differences in groups of different socio-economic background. To the extent that social uniformities and area overlap and are not coincident, the ecological technique led to considerable confusion, a great deal of verbal legerdemain in the attempt to reconcile the difficulty, and necessary lacunae in their analysis of behavioral phenomena.

The concept of the gradient is that of "the rate of change of a variable condition like poverty, or home ownership, or birth, or divorce, from the standpoint of its distribution over a given area."<sup>28</sup> These rates are considered to vary positively or negatively in simple linear fashion from the center of the city outward along the successive zones. Shaw's study of delinquency is one of the most successful of the ecological monographs using this procedure. The basic assumption underlying the technique is,

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>28</sup> Ernest W. Burgess, "The Determination of Gradients in the Growth of the City," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, XXI (1927), 178; quoted in Alihan, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

once more, the differential and orderly distribution of variable social phenomena by areas. Again, for class or other sociological forms of analysis, the principal difficulty is the question of the relationship of area to the economic or social conditions which must be presumed to intervene as causal agents or conditions of the different rates of the phenomenon being studied. If higher rates of delinquency are found in the areas where low economic conditions prevail *but are not exclusively the conditions in the area*, perhaps even more significant correlations could be obtained by studying the variation of delinquency by economic conditions of families, without trying to include in the initial analysis the factor of area. *In other words, focusing on variations by area may serve to obscure the entire extent of the variation by social and economic factors.* This is perhaps the most serious difficulty with that portion of ecological theory which has been most extensively used in ecological research.

### Ecological Research

Turning now to the research monographs of the Ecological school, we find that, basically, they are of two types: the "problem" studies and the "community" studies. The problem studies focus on some phenomenon generally regarded as being antisocial or asocial—in other words, detrimental to the welfare of society—and compute and attempt to explain its distribution over various areas of the city. Studies of delinquency, the boys' gang, the hobo, divorce and desertion, prostitution, the taxi-dance hall, mental disorders, and suicide all fall under this category. The community studies, fewer in number than the problem type, are studies usually of neighborhoods or "natural areas" of the city, where the focus is not so much on a specific problem as on the social system or systems which are presumed to make up the area. Reports on the "Gold Coast," the "Slum," and the "Ghetto" are examples of this type. No systematized scheme of class analysis is used throughout these monographs, but the term "class" or "social class" occurs not infrequently for the characterization of socio-economic groupings, and the relationships of problem phe-

nomena to such variables as amount of rental and occupation are often investigated.

In the "problem" studies, three techniques may be discerned, although all three may not be found in any given monograph: (a) the incidence of the phenomenon is plotted and computed by areas and zones of the city; (b) the social and economic characteristics of the areas of higher and lower incidence are ascertained; (c) the incidence of the phenomenon is correlated with socioeconomic factors for the city as a whole, without regard to specific areas. The first two derive from the ecological approach and are found in nearly all of the studies. The third is a standard sociological technique which is not in any sense ecological. Also, case history materials are often included which are used in aiding and illustrating the causal interpretations advanced by the authors.

Shaw's *Delinquency Areas*<sup>29</sup> is one of the typical problem studies, and an unusually clear-cut one. In this work separate series of data on juvenile delinquents in Chicago for given periods of years were studied, and the home residences of the delinquents for each series were plotted on a map of the city. Rates were computed for "square mile areas" composed of combinations of census tracts, the rates being based on the age and sex categories of the potential offenders, and the results presented on a map of Chicago. "Radial maps" were constructed by computing the rates in the areas along important streets radiating out in various directions from the "Loop" or central business section. And, finally, zone maps were constructed. These were based on the averaging of rates for all the areas within the successive zones created by drawing concentric circles at one-mile intervals, centering on the Loop. With minor variations, the results for all these series, and for all the types of maps, point to the same pattern of distribution of the residences of juvenile offenders. The highest rates are found in the areas immediately adjacent to the central business section, and the rates gradually decline in the areas as they become increasingly distant from the Loop.

<sup>29</sup> Clifford R. Shaw, with the collaboration of Frederick M. Zorbaugh, Henry D. McKay, and Leonard S. Cottrell, *Delinquency Areas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929.)



Shaw does not attempt a systematic analysis of the social conditions characteristic of the various areas, declaring that this is left for further study. However, in several of the chapters he gives a brief description of the areas, based on general observation. For instance, the centrally located area adjacent to the Loop, which has the highest rate of delinquency, is characterized as an area of physical deterioration where groups of the lowest economic level reside—in other words, a slum. Areas with very low rates are described as “rather exclusive residential communities of high-class apartments and single family dwellings.”<sup>30</sup>

This would seem to be an interpretation of differences in rates of delinquency in terms of class conditions, vaguely and generally defined in the economic sense: the higher the economic level, the better the residential section and the lower the delinquency rate. However, the entrance of newer ethnic groups—European immigrants and Southern Negroes—producing a situation of cultural conflict within the groups which leads to the breakdown of former social controls, is also offered as a part of the causal explanation. The lack of constructive community forces is also mentioned. Finally, in a “tentative interpretation,” Shaw seems to submerge the class system viewed as a power structure into ecological processes buttressed by the entrance of ethnic groups:

It has been quite common in discussions of delinquency to attribute causal significance to such conditions as poor housing, overcrowding, low living standards, low educational standards, and so on. But these conditions themselves probably reflect a type of community life. By treating them one treats only symptoms of more basic processes. Even the disorganized family and the delinquent gang, which are often thought of as the main factors in delinquency, probably reflect community situations.

In short, with the process of growth of the city, the invasion of residential communities by business and industry causes a disintegration of the community as a unit of social control. This disorganization is intensified by the influx of foreign national and racial groups whose old cultural and social controls break down in the new cultural and racial situation of the city. In this state of social disorganization, community resistance is low. Delinquent and criminal patterns arise and are transmitted socially just as any other cul-

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.



tural and social pattern is transmitted. In time these delinquent patterns may become dominant and shape the attitudes and behavior of persons living in the area. Thus the section becomes an area of delinquency.<sup>31</sup>

Here, the factor of differential economic power seems to be relegated to a secondary role, and we are instructed to look for the basic predisposing causes of delinquency in the "natural" processes of urban growth coupled with the initial influx of ethnic groups.

Thrasher's *The Gang*,<sup>32</sup> another classic study of the Ecological school, contains a vast amount of valuable descriptive material on the setting and activities of 1313 boys' gangs discovered by the author in the city of Chicago. It is demonstrated that these groups, uncontrolled by the social demands of the larger society, satisfy immediate social needs of the boys and young men themselves, but indoctrinate their participants into delinquent and semicriminal patterns of behavior. The location of the gangs is plotted on a map of Chicago, and their major incidence is shown to occur in the "Zone in Transition" immediately adjacent to the Loop, and in "interstitial" areas which are "fingers" of the slum extending into other zones.

The author seems to attach an explanatory significance to the often-used term "interstitial." Areas characterized by this term are described as deteriorating neighborhoods where residential populations are shifting and industry and commerce are constantly encroaching—i.e., the familiar urban slum on the periphery of the business district. The residential areas and suburbs of the "better type," however, are said to be "practically gangless." Gangland is thus declared to be "a phenomenon of human ecology."<sup>33</sup>

In addition to coming from slum environments, the members of gangs are usually children of immigrants or Negroes. Data on over eight hundred gangs reveal that nearly 88 per cent of the groups were predominantly composed of members of foreign par-

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 205-06.

<sup>32</sup> Frederick M. Thrasher, *The Gang* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927; 2nd ed., 1936).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

entage, approximately 7 per cent were Negro, and about 5 per cent were gangs made up of whites of native white parentage.<sup>34</sup> Thrasher emphasizes the primacy of class factors, however, pointing out that boys of older American stock, though less numerous in the gang areas, entered gangs just as readily as the children of immigrants when of the same class, and that in "middle-class" Jewish and "high-class" Negro communities gang life was not prevalent. He also calls attention to the lack of family controls and inadequacy of community recreational agencies in the slum areas as intervening causal agents.

In other passages Thrasher attributes gang phenomena to the social disorganization attendant upon rapid social change and economic development and prosperous business conditions.<sup>35</sup> Thus the economic power dynamics which produce slums become relegated to the background. "Interstitial areas," "phenomenon of human ecology," "rapid growth of cities," are all phrases which tend to emphasize "natural" and impersonal forces which obscure the operation of differential economic power and ethnic prejudices as direct power relations among groups.

From the point of view of contribution to class analysis, *Delinquency Areas* and *The Gang* are of substantially greater value than a group of ecological problem studies dealing respectively with the hobo, vice, mental disorders, suicide, opium addiction, and the taxi-dance hall. The reason for this may be summed up by stating that the ecological school, in its committed emphasis on area study, did not use systematically the important factor of a time dimension. That is, by and large, the last mentioned group of studies, dealing as they do with adult phenomena and analyzing the characteristics of the area where the phenomena occur, do not ask when the persons came to the area, or what their socio-economic backgrounds were if they were not originally from the area. Studies of delinquency and the gang were not faced with this problem since they dealt with the behavior of children and young adults, most of whom had not left their original homes and whose formative socio-economic backgrounds were thus largely encompassed in a study of the area itself. Class analysis, in

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>35</sup> See, particularly, *Ibid.*, pp. 487-89.

other words, in the fullest sense, must have a time dimension, focusing both on the formative socio-economic background of the person and the position attained later in adult life. This factor is especially important when rooming-house areas are used for the computation of rates, since these areas are likely to harbor detached individuals of widely different social and economic backgrounds. The inclusion of rooming-house areas, in fact, adds another dimension since, as the ecologists have shown, here are persons who, for the most part, have left the more articulated social systems composed of family groups. The connection between the anonymous life of the rooming-house area and high rates for phenomena of social disorganization has been well demonstrated by the ecological monographs. But for class analysis, this connection reveals only one phase of an intermediate process, particularly where we have no systematic analysis of the socio-economic backgrounds from which these detached individuals have come.

Anderson's *The Hobo*,<sup>36</sup> an early work of the Ecological school, gives an account of the activities, experience, and institutions of the homeless men, largely migratory casual laborers, who made their temporary headquarters in a localized area of Chicago, near the Loop, in the early twenties. They are described, of course, as an economically dispossessed group. However, they are "gathered from every walk of life."<sup>37</sup> Six major causes "which reduce a man to the status of a homeless migrant and casual worker" are listed: (a) Unemployment and Seasonal Work, characterized as "maladjustments of modern industry";<sup>38</sup> (b) Industrial Inadequacy (of the person); (c) Defects of Personality; (d) Crises in the Life of the Person; (e) Racial or National Discrimination; and (f) Wanderlust.<sup>39</sup> No systematic account of the socio-economic background of the "hoboes" prior to assuming that state is given. The appeal of the "radical" labor organization, the Industrial Workers of the World, for many of the migratory work-

<sup>36</sup> Nels Anderson, *The Hobo* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>38</sup> This is one of the few references in the ecological works to possible malfunctioning of the economic system itself.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266; see also chap. v.

ers is cited. The hobo, however, is pictured as an extreme individualist who does not make a good organization member.

Cavan's study of suicide<sup>40</sup> contains historical and anthropological materials and contemporary American and European data which give rates by states, city size, urban-rural residence, race, religion, sex, marital status, and various other categories; however, there are few data presented which throw light on the relationship of class factors to this phenomenon. In a chapter which reports on the distribution of residences of suicides by areas in Chicago, the areas of highest rates are shown to be the "Loop," with "its periphery of cheap hotels for men and sooty flats over stores"; the Lower North Side, "which includes a shifting population of unattached men and an equally shifting population of young men and women in the rooming-house area"; the Near South Side, and the West Madison area, "with its woman-less street of flophouses, missions, cheap restaurants, and hundreds of men who drift in aimless, bleary-eyed abandon."<sup>41</sup>

Cavan's interpretation of the high rates in these areas is in terms of the "social disorganization" which characterizes them. In one place, she implies that the suicide rate of the "middle class and wealthy people who live in the outlying communities" is low,<sup>42</sup> but this analysis is not pursued. In another, however, she speaks in passing of "the high suicide rate of the more highly educated,"<sup>43</sup> apparently on the basis of European data. Elsewhere she generalizes from case history material the low suicide rate of Negroes and low-income immigrant groups, and seasonal variations to state that habitual poverty is not conducive to suicide, but that economic crises involving abrupt financial loss may lead to personal disorganization and eventually to self-destruction.<sup>44</sup>

Faris and Dunham's study of the area distribution of mental disorders in Chicago<sup>45</sup> reveals that the rates for this phenomenon follow the typical ecological distribution, being highest at or near the center of the city, and falling away with increasing distance from the center. On further analysis, however, it turns out

<sup>40</sup> Ruth Shonle Cavan, *Suicide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>44</sup> See pp. 268 ff.

<sup>45</sup> Robert E. L. Faris and H. Warren Dunham, *Mental Disorders in Urban Areas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939).



that it is the large number of cases of schizophrenia in the total which produces this distribution, for the manic-depressive psychosis is found to be distributed in scattered fashion over the city. And when the manic-depressive rates for the areas are correlated with median rentals for areas, it appears that a significant positive relationship exists which indicates "a definite tendency for the manic-depressive cases to be drawn from higher economic and social levels in the city in contrast to the schizophrenic cases."<sup>46</sup> The areas near the center of the city which contain the highest rates for schizophrenia are described as "hobohemia communities," and "central rooming-house districts." Rates above the average are also found in the "first-settlement immigrant communities," and "deteriorated parts of the Negro area."<sup>47</sup> The interpretation of the precipitating causal relationships is in terms of the social disorganization, high degree of mobility, and consequent social isolation of the person which characterizes these areas. Other findings are that the area incidence of the alcoholic psychoses, general paralysis due to syphilitic infection, and the old age psychoses show significant correlations with such indices of economic position as percentage of population of area on relief, average monthly rental, and home valuation of area which indicate that these psychoses tend to be associated with low economic level.

Reckless's monograph, *Vice in Chicago*,<sup>48</sup> deals in the main with the area distribution of resorts of prostitution as discovered from the public records. There are virtually no data on the socio-economic backgrounds of the prostitutes themselves (the rise of Negro prostitution is noted, however) and none on the socio-economic backgrounds of the patrons. The resorts are found to be less concentrated near the center of the city in 1930 than was the case in 1910, at which time an unofficial "segregation" policy was being followed. However, even in 1930 there were relatively few resorts in the better residential areas. The percentage of

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80. Also a much higher percentage of manic-depressive psychosis (and psychoneurosis) is diagnosed at private as opposed to state mental hospitals, indicating the differential use of private and public facilities by economic groups. See pp. 28-32.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>48</sup> Walter C. Reckless, *Vice in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933).



home ownership in "vice areas" was much lower than in non-vice neighborhoods. The vice resorts were found to be located in areas which contained most of the charity cases in the city, but tended to be localized within these areas rather than spread evenly throughout them.

Cressey's *The Taxi-Dance Hall*<sup>49</sup> provides information on the halls and the hired girl dancers and the male patrons who participate in the life of this commercialized recreation. The resorts are located in the central business district and the nearby rooming-house area. The residences of the girls are concentrated somewhat near the central part of the city, but with considerable scatter over other areas. An unusually large number come from the Polish immigrant areas. According to a small sample study, many of the girls come from homes where the "breadwinning" father is absent, indicating "economic instability" in the girls' families.<sup>50</sup> The life histories presented point generally to family backgrounds of low economic position. Most of the girls have worked at relatively unskilled occupations such as waitress, factory operative, or salesgirl. Conflict, cultural and personal, between the girls and their parents or stepparents is indicated as being a characteristic part of their home backgrounds. The patrons are selected largely by personal, racial, and nationality background factors which impose social hardships, but as for class factors, patrons come "from the occupational groups of the skilled and semi-skilled craftsmen and from commercial employments involving relatively little special training or skill. Only occasionally are professional people and business executives found in these establishments. The patrons represent, in the main, the great 'lower middle class.'"<sup>51</sup> A table giving the occupations of a sample group of one hundred patrons is presented to support this generalization.

Dai's study of opium addiction<sup>52</sup> places the concentration of residences of arrested or hospitalized addicts in the central portion of the city, in the areas of high mobility and of low economic

<sup>49</sup> Paul G. Cressey, *The Taxi-Dance Hall* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>52</sup> Bingham Dai, *Opium Addiction in Chicago* (Shanghai, China: The Commercial Press, Limited, 1937).

position as determined by rentals and the physical condition of the buildings. Also, according to federal records, an overwhelming proportion of addicts are in straitened financial circumstances. But we are not told whether this low economic position predated or postdated their addiction. In an occupational analysis of addicts as compared with the general population of Chicago, Dai found that the "domestic and personal service," "recreation and amusement," and "illegal professions" categories were substantially higher for the addict group.<sup>53</sup> Only slight educational differences were noted between addicts and the general population, in favor of the latter.

Two of the problem studies of the Ecological school deal with the family. Mowrer's work<sup>54</sup> is a general discussion of family breakdown, but includes a chapter on the "ecology" of divorce in Chicago. We are told that desertion "characterizes the poverty group," while divorce "is confined largely to the middle and upper classes."<sup>55</sup> A further class equation is made (to be regarded as "relative"): paternal family areas are those of "the proletariat" and the immigrant and have only desertion; the equalitarian family areas are those of the "middle and professional classes" and have both divorce and desertion; and maternal family areas are those of the "commuter," or "upper bourgeoisie," and have no family disintegration. Moreover, these family types and class groupings are described as being distributed by concentric circle zones. The separate area rates of divorce and desertion were compiled from public records, but the characterization of the family types in various areas, the class designations, and the zonal hypothesis are presented largely without evidence. There is also the "emancipated family," which is referred to as an interstitial group, ecologically, and for which no data are presented, presumably because it is not area based.<sup>56</sup>

Frazier's study of the Negro family in Chicago<sup>57</sup> is one of the most thoroughly class-oriented monographs of the Ecological

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>54</sup> Ernest R. Mowrer, *Family Disorganization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. v.

<sup>57</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932).

school. There is no systematic definition of class offered; the terms "upper class," "upper occupational class," "elite," "different levels of social development," "economic and social stature," "different elements in the Negro population," "industrial and professional classes" are used as a matter of course to implement the breakdown of the Negro population into "class" groupings. Frazier's essential thesis is that characteristics of family life among Negroes vary by "class," although these variations tend to be submerged by averages computed for the whole group, because of the great preponderance in numbers of the unskilled Negro, newly arrived in urban areas. In a discussion of the historical development of Negro family life, he describes, on the basis of historical documents, the emergence of a small "upper class" based on free ancestry and mulatto skin color and features. This class had stable family traditions. In later times an occupational criterion was added to this index.

The Negro community in Chicago, concentrated on the South Side, expanded and overflowed into surrounding areas with the influx of large numbers of Southern migrant Negroes during World War I. At present the Negro area, although contiguous, is divided as "different elements in the Negro population have tended to become segregated in different zones within the community."<sup>58</sup>

Seven of these zones, composed of combinations of census districts, are distinguished. The percentage of home ownership is shown to rise from Zone 1 through Zone 7. The percentage of white collar and skilled workers rises from Zone 1 through Zone 7, and the percentage of domestic service workers and laborers decreases accordingly. The percentage of Northern-born heads of families and the percentage of mulattoes increase, generally, from Zone 1 through Zone 7. Thus the "class" level of the zones is distinguished. Indices of family disorganization, such as rates of illegitimacy, desertion, nonsupport, and juvenile delinquency, in general, decline from Zone 1 through Zone 7—in other words, as the class level of the zones rises. No data on divorce by zones are presented.

Frazier's interpretation is that "the variations which these

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

statistics showed when they were related to the organization of the Negro community, reflected fundamental cultural differences in the Negro population."<sup>59</sup> The class system delineated for the Negro community seems to be a two-group one—upper and lower—although this system is not integrated with the seven-zone analysis.

Of the three "community" monographs of the Ecological school,<sup>60</sup> McKenzie's descriptive study of neighborhoods in Columbus, Ohio,<sup>61</sup> is the earliest. In this work he suggests elements of the zonal hypotheses, later taken over and developed by Burgess. His principal thesis is that the city is divided into area-based communities into which the population is segregated by "economic status" and "racial and national sentiments." Average per elector tax returns on household furniture are computed for the various wards of Columbus, and the large variations are shown. However, it is pointed out that the ward "is not a homogeneous economic area,"<sup>62</sup> and that areas and homogeneous social groups sometimes do not coincide. This makes social control and neighborhood organization difficult. Residential stability is shown to vary directly with economic position. Among others, McKenzie distinguishes a Negro community, a German section, and a Jewish area inhabited by orthodox Jews. The "Reformed" [*sic*] Jews, largely of German nationality background, "are dispersed along the eastern section of the city in the better residential district."<sup>63</sup> There are "three grades of economic neighborhoods." These are described as "poor, middle-class, and wealthy residential districts."<sup>64</sup>

Wirth's monograph, *The Ghetto*,<sup>65</sup> offers an historical account of the European ghetto, and focuses particularly on the current area of Jewish immigrant first settlement in Chicago, which is described as a "slum." However, an incidental description of historical and current class divisions within the Jewish community

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>60</sup> Blumenthal's *Small Town Stuff*, while a community study, and done under Burgess's supervision, has no ecological framework, and will be considered in a later chapter.

<sup>61</sup> Roderick Duncan McKenzie, *The Neighborhood: A Study of Local Life in the City of Columbus, Ohio* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 155-56.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 352-53.

<sup>65</sup> Louis Wirth, *The Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928).



is given. No systematic definition of class appears; the terms, "lower middle-class," "middle-class," "aristocracy," "elite," and "cultural and economic stratum" are used without further explanation. In general, the class divisions are pictured as involving status, economic, and cultural differences. In large part they are based on precedence of immigration into the United States and area of origin.

The Sephardic Jews, of Spanish and Portuguese intermediate origin, came during colonial times, and became economically established: their descendants looked down on the later arrivals who came from Germany during the mid-nineteenth century. The descendants of both of these groups, in turn, feel themselves to be superior to the large influx of Jews from Eastern Europe who arrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and began at the bottom of the economic and occupational ladder. Wirth indicates that these attitudes created, on the whole, separate social systems, which functioned together only in crisis situations. No settlement of Sephardic Jews appeared in Chicago, so that in that city the German Jews formed the Jewish "aristocracy." The German Jews lived on the North and South Side, and generally embraced "Reform" Judaism. The Russian and other Eastern Jews lived in the "ghetto" on the West Side, and maintained their Orthodox form of worship. Gradually, however, some of the Eastern immigrant Jews who had moved up the economic and occupational ladder began to leave the ghetto and settle in "lower-middle-class" residential areas, which quickly became solidly Jewish as more immigrants and their children moved into the area. A third area of settlement is located in "the outlying residential sections of the city . . . and finally the suburban regions."<sup>66</sup> The relationship of the German Jews to these areas of settlement is not made clear, although it is implied that they had inhabited the area of second settlement, and then moved out to the area of third settlement when the Russian Jews moved in. Apparently, some of the more successful and accepted of the Russian Jews are also located in the area of third settlement and are beginning to mingle with the German Jews and to embrace the Reform way of worship. Wirth's account raises many

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.



interesting questions concerning the economic and social divisions within the Jewish group, but many of them are not answered in this work, which, to be sure, is focused by design only on the "ghetto."

Turning finally to Zorbaugh's *The Gold Coast and the Slum*,<sup>67</sup> we come upon probably the most clearly articulated attempt of the Ecological school to delineate the contours of class life in Chicago. This work is a study of the communities or "natural areas" of Chicago's Near North Side. It is the only work of the Ecological school which deals in a general way with the upper stratum of Chicago's social life, for the famous "Gold Coast," whose appellation is a synonym for wealth and luxury, is located here. The study is based on documents written by residents of the various areas, interviewers, and social workers, and on general observations made by the author. The term "class" is seldom used, but the "Gold Coast" is pictured as the area of "society," wealth and affluence, and "fashion," in contrast to the poverty-stricken area of the "slum."

The Near North Side is divided into three major areas, extending from East (along the Lake Front) to West: these are the Gold Coast, the "Rooming House Area," and the "Slum." Within the slum are found

. . . the criminal, the radical, the bohemian, the migratory worker, the immigrant, the unsuccessful, the queer, and unadjusted. . . . The common denominator of the slum is its submerged aspect and its detachment from the city as a whole. The slum is a bleak area of segregation of the sediment of society; an area of extreme poverty, tenements, ramshackle buildings, of evictions and evaded rents; an area of working mothers and children, of high rates of birth, infant mortality, illegitimacy, and death; an area of pawnbrokers and second-hand stores, of gangs, of "flops" where every bed is a vote. . . . The slum district is drab and mean. In ten months the United Charities here had 460 relief cases. Poverty is extreme. Many families are living in one or two basement rooms for which they pay less than ten dollars a month. . . . These rooms are stove heated, and wood is sold on the streets in bundles, and coal in small sacks. The majority of houses, back toward the river, are of wood, and not a few have win-

<sup>67</sup> Harvey Warren Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929).

dows broken out. Smoke, the odor from the gas works, and the smell of dirty alleys is in the air. Both rooms and lots are overcrowded. Back tenements . . . are common.<sup>68</sup>

Separate sections are devoted to the ethnic colonies in the slum: Italian, Persian, Greek, Negro, and the "poorer elements" of the German and Swedish groups. We are also given a brief descriptive glimpse of the hobo and his world. Towertown, the "Bohemian" section, composed of young would-be artists and radicals, is "in the slum, but not of it." A chapter is devoted to the rooming-house area, and the residents here are described as being a white-collar group of clerical workers and students of both sexes, predominantly unmarried or, if married, childless. Anonymity, mobility, and often unconventional sexual behavior are pictured as characterizing the life of the area.

Conspicuous by omission from this area is any neighborhood of stable families with children which might be considered "middle-class." Also, one is led to infer from this study that the slum neighborhoods are inhabited entirely by members of minority groups, with the exception of the nonfamily hoboes and migrants and young "bohemians."

Zorbaugh's investigation of Chicago's Gold Coast is certainly notable for turning a pioneer research focus on a stratum of community life which sociology, with its historically social work orientation, had long bypassed. And it contains valuable descriptive materials. However, the limitations of the ecological approach are strikingly apparent in it. For it confines itself to a limited area, and the social system which Gold Coast life epitomizes is, as the author points out, not confined to that area. Of the six thousand persons whose names are in the Chicago "Social Register," only two thousand, he reports, reside in the Gold Coast section. Where the others are located and what their relations with the Gold Coasters are is only hinted at: "The fact is that much even of the 'social' life of the people who live on the Gold Coast centers about the fashionable suburbs of Chicago. . . ."<sup>69</sup> Moreover, some residents of the Gold Coast "are not members of 'society' itself." In other words, the enforced area identification

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

interferes with a sharply focused appraisal of the entire set of social relationships with which he is really concerned. Within these limits, Zorbaugh presents an interesting account of Gold Coast life, based on documents written by participating residents themselves. It is a kaleidoscopic rather than systematic account, but one pieces together certain facts: Chicago's Gold Coasters live in expensive, luxurious houses or apartments. They ascribe highest status to themselves. They have particularistic mores and consider it important to show "good form" and to possess the amenities of life. They belong to "fashionable" clubs and other associations. They play the "social game," which consists of entertaining and being entertained by the "right" people, and having these events reported in the society columns of the newspapers, having the correct associational memberships, and taking part in fashionable charitable activities. If they are successful, their name is recorded in the "Social Register." Children are sent to private rather than public schools. Clothes must be fashionable but not extreme. The correct manner, or "social ritual," must be displayed. This is a subtle set of patterns which combines graciousness, knowledge of the ritual, complete self-confidence, and a dash of "hauteur":

The social ritual, with the attitudes which cluster about it, serves at once as a mark to identify the members of the Four Hundred, as a means of intercourse among them, and as a barrier between them and the rest of the world. The behavior patterns which are embodied in the ritual, which may be summed up in the words "good form" and *savoir faire*, backed up by the ruthless competition of the social game, constitute the main force for social control in "society." But more than this, the ritual lends to "society" an ease, a dignity, and a charm which are the despair of many a "climber" and the envy of many not "born to the manner."<sup>70</sup>

A generation ago membership in this social system depended on hereditary participation. At present newly acquired wealth has led to a generation of "social climbers" who with considerable, though varying, success seek entry into it. "Society" is divided into a number of cliques based on age and interests. During the

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

summer and part of the winter, the Gold Coasters scatter to "fashionable" resorts located in various parts of the country. All in all, the members of the "Four Hundred" are described as living in a social world from which the rest of the city is excluded.

## Summary

We have now completed a general survey of the relationship of the Ecological school to class theory and research. Applying in systematic fashion the factors of analysis and their subdivisions outlined in Chapter I, we find the following:

*Definition: Stratification Variables.* The Ecological school had no precise definition of "class." Terms such as "middle-class" and "upper-class" are used without definition or explanation. Class-connoting terms such as "slum," "elite," "upper stratum," "white collar," "workingmen," "better residential district," etc., are most often used as though their meaning were self-evident, although the slum is described as an area of poverty and physical deterioration of buildings. Correlations between factors of economic power and the incidence of certain phenomena of social disorganization are investigated, usually through the medium of the area. Factors used include average monthly rental, home valuation, percentage of home ownership in the area, percentage of population in the area on relief, average per elector tax returns on household furniture, and occupation, where breakdowns are made variously in terms of domestic service and unskilled labor, skilled labor, white-collar clerical, and professional and business, terms assumed without discussion to represent an ascending order of economic power. A few of the works describe groups in terms of status relationship, notably those on the Negro family, the ghetto, and the Gold Coast and the slum. "Generalized class awareness" on the part of the groups of "inferior" and "superior" status is indicated, although this term is, of course, not used. There is little examination of the structure of political power by the Ecological school; however, ethnic residents of the slums are pictured



as knowing virtually nothing about election issues and as being "controlled" by local "bosses."

*Associated Variables.* There are signs of the existence of somewhat separate group life, or social systems, by class in a few of the works, particularly in *The Gold Coast and the Slum*. In general, however, this point of analysis is not explored systematically by the ecologists. The existence of different cultural attributes by class (at least in incidence), especially those involving behavior patterns relevant to social disorganization, is implicit in the works which correlate class factors with divorce, delinquency, etc. Areas with different economic indices (such as average rental) are often shown to have different rates of the particular phenomenon of social disorganization being studied. Usually, the lower the economic index of the area, the higher the rate of desertion, mental disorder, delinquency, gang life, etc. However, it is not easy to isolate the theoretically separable factors of low economic position, ethnic (immigrant or Negro) background, and adult isolation (furnished-room life) in the ecological causational scheme offered to account for these phenomena. The deteriorated, shabby, dirty, and crowded living conditions of the slum are often described, in implicit contrast to living conditions in "better" residential areas. With the notable exception of Zorbaugh's study of the Gold Coast, the more intimate and personal cultural behavior manifestations, such as dress and "manner," are not investigated by class.

*Ascertainment.* Ascertainment, for the ecologists, is usually a matter of spatial location. People who live in "middle-class residential areas" (undefined) are middle-class. People who live in areas which have a certain average rental are presumed to belong to the same economic grouping. In a sense, it is the area which is ascertained rather than the people who live in the area. Information is usually obtained from census tract data. The limitations of this technique have been discussed above. When obvious exceptions have to be made—for instance, the distinguishing of a "bohemian" section in the slum—apparently this is done on the basis of interviews and general observation. In the case



of determining the members of "Gold Coast Society" it is intimated, though not definitely stated, that the Chicago Social Register was used.

*Social Mobility.* There is little systematic attention to the phenomenon of vertical social mobility in the writings of the Ecological school. The theoretical emphasis on "process" turns out to be predominantly an examination of the processes of change in land use. A few random comments and studies may be found, however. Frazier notes that the large influx of southern Negroes into Chicago has led to "the rise of higher occupational classes of considerable size and influence in the Negro community," namely professional and businessmen.<sup>71</sup> Wirth notes briefly the historical rise in economic and occupational position of the first two waves of Jewish immigration to the United States, the Sephardic and the German, and then devotes some attention to the "mass migration" of Russian Jews out of the Chicago "ghetto" into the areas of second settlement—a migration which indicates the attainment of higher economic and occupational position. Comparison of the number of Russian-born persons (presumably mostly Jews) in four wards on the West Side (ghetto area) in 1914 and 1920, reveals an average 50 per cent loss at the time of the latter enumeration.<sup>72</sup> As noted above, there is an area of "third settlement" in the "fashionable" suburbs, but we are given no figures on the number or proportion of Jews who reside there. Zorbaugh writes of the "social climbers" who, possessing sufficient wealth, try to make their way into "society" by playing the "social game." No figures on their numbers are given. His comments on the distinctiveness of the personality behavior patterns of the members of the "Four Hundred," which the "climbers" find difficult to emulate successfully, are of considerable theoretical significance as indicating the existence of internalized cultural behavior patterns which act as a partial bar to upward social mobility.

*Ethnic Stratification.* The ecological works combine to give the dominant impression that nearly all of the family groups in

<sup>71</sup> Frazier, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>72</sup> Wirth, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

the slum are immigrant or Negro. There are few statistical data offered in support,<sup>73</sup> but there are many general statements which make this equation. The immigrant groups are indicated as being predominantly of Southern and Eastern European extraction. Only the lodging-house population of the slum, largely single adults, is implied to have a considerable proportion of whites of native parentage. White families of native parentage presumably start from the "middle-class" up. No clear focus is thrown on this problem, and one is forced to generalize from cumulative, unsystematized statements.

Frazier definitely demonstrates the existence of a class system ✓ within the Negro group. It seems to be a two-class intragroup system and to exist completely inside the Negro population—that is, no essential social contact between "upper-class" Negroes and whites is indicated. These latter two points, however, are inferred from only a few random bits of evidence (for instance, the ecological concentration of professional and "business" Negroes). They are not at all developed by the investigator.

Wirth indicates the existence of a three-class system within the Jewish group. Apparently "middle-class" Jews are ecologically concentrated. Whether "upper-class" Jews are so concentrated is difficult to determine from his brief remarks on the subject. Also, whether middle- and upper-class Jews function largely within the Jewish group, or have significant social relationships with non-Jews of similar class position is not made clear. There are a few indications that the middle- and upper-class Jews form social systems which function largely within the Jewish group.<sup>74</sup> Wirth seems to attribute this to social prejudices and pressures applied by non-Jews. In general, however, information on these points is random and sketchy, Wirth's primary focus being on the "lower-class" Jews of the "ghetto." This latter group is shown to function definitely as a Jewish group, its adults, at least, having few significant social contacts with members of other groups of similar economic position.

<sup>73</sup> Thrasher's data on the ethnic make-up of boys' gangs, previously cited, constitute one exception.

<sup>74</sup> There are incidental indications of this also in another largely ecological study of a Philadelphia suburban area. See Arthur Hosking Jones, *Cheltenham Township* (Philadelphia, 1940).

In short, the Ecological school attacked the problem of class indirectly through area study. Using an indirect approach, and having no well-articulated theoretical formulation of class, its results were necessarily somewhat blurred. Also, its variety of practitioners and looseness of formal theory guaranteed variant emphases and foci on class phenomena. Nevertheless, all its members demonstrated sensitivity to the problem of class. In their substantial totality the works of the ecologists suggested a formidable inverse relationship between economic position and phenomena of social disorganization.

### Sorokin's *Social Mobility*<sup>75</sup>

In the late 1920's, to the American sociological literature on class was added a major work by the former chairman of the Department of Sociology at the University of Petrograd, in political exile from his native Russia. It is obvious that Professor Sorokin's *Social Mobility* cannot be regarded as an exclusive product of forces indigenous to the American scene. However, in this work, Sorokin shows himself to be well acquainted with American materials on class, and he had, by that time, carried out several small research studies dealing with class phenomena in the United States.

Actually, *Social Mobility* is an analysis and compendium of materials on various aspects of social stratification, for social mobility, as such, is only a part of the subject matter of the work. Social stratification, class characteristics, and social mobility are the three related subjects of Sorokin's attention. Under the first the author defines the nature and types of social stratification and deals with its fluctuations in history and its causes. Under the second he attempts to demonstrate and explain the relationship of the stratified layers of society to certain physical, mental, and psychological traits. And under the third he deals with the channels and causes of social mobility and the amount of social mobility in contemporary societies, and engages in a delineation and

<sup>75</sup> Pitirim Sorokin, *Social Mobility* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927).

assessment of the effects of social mobility. In performing these labors, Sorokin ranges through world history, anthropology, current events, and sociological speculation and research, presenting, in support of his many generalizations, evidence of widely differing cogency and carefulness.

*Definition: Stratification Variables.* For Sorokin, individuals exist in "social space," which is the "universe composed of the human population of the earth." Social space has two major dimensions, horizontal and vertical. The vertical dimension involves "the phenomena of hierarchy, ranks, domination and subordination, authority and obedience, promotion and degradation"; and these phenomena may be thought of "in the form of stratification and superposition." The vertical dimension, he declares, is his major concern in this work.<sup>76</sup> Later, "social stratification" is more formally defined. It consists of

. . . the differentiation of a given population into hierarchically superposed classes. It is manifested in the existence of upper and lower social layers. Its basis and very essence consist in an unequal distribution of rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, social values and privations, social power and influences among the members of a society.<sup>77</sup>

The concrete forms of social stratification may be reduced to three major types—the economic, the political, and the occupational:

If the economic status of the members of a society is unequal, if among them there are both wealthy and poor, the society is *economically stratified*. . . . If the social ranks within a group are hierarchically superposed with respect to their authority and prestige, their honors and titles; if there are the rulers and the ruled, then whatever are their names (monarchs, executives, masters, bosses), . . . the group is *politically stratified*. . . . If the members of a society are differentiated into various occupational groups, and some of the occupations are regarded as more honorable than others, if the members of an occupational group are divided into bosses of different authority and

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. i.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.



into members who are subordinated to the bosses, the group is *occupationally stratified*.<sup>78</sup>

Sorokin further distinguishes between "inter-" and "intraoccupational" stratification. Also, each form of stratification itself has two dimensions: the "height" ("distance from the bottom to the top") and the "profile" (number of "stories" and slope of the "social building"). These three forms of stratification are declared to be closely related to each other, for those who occupy the upper strata in one category usually are in the upper strata in the others also. However, there are many exceptions; therefore, says Sorokin, each form has to be studied separately. He explicitly excludes the use of the term "social class" because of its too general nature:

I do not use the term "social classes" in a general sense, and prefer to talk separately of the economic, the occupational, and the political strata or classes. The best possible definition of social class is the totality of the people who have a similar position in regard to occupational, economic, and political status. Although convenient for some summary use, in a special study of social stratification, it becomes unsatisfactory in view of the indicated fact of overlapping and exceptions.<sup>79</sup>

However, Sorokin breaks his own rule on numerous occasions throughout the work and uses the term "social class" as a general summary term without further explanation.

Of the theoretically separable factors in class analysis, then, Sorokin chooses three: economic, occupational, and political. The economic is based on measurable economic power, the occupational on status and power, and the political on status and power. He makes no clear distinction between status and power factors, and there is virtually no separate discussion of status as a socio-psychological complex. He does state incidentally, in a later context, that the "narrow-proletarian psychology" (that is, corporate class-consciousness) is more likely to appear among "hereditary proletarians," or, in other words, where the channels of social mobility are blocked.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18, n. 2.



*Associated Variables.* Little attention is given to the possibility of group life on a class basis in contemporary Western society, although Sorokin's concept of "social boxes" within which a man lives out his life in immobile societies approaches this idea. The concept, however, is not systematically developed. There is a brief consideration of occupational influences in determining such culturally acquired behavior traits as posture, speech, dress, attitudes, and values; but this theme is developed in only a very sketchy fashion.

Sorokin presents the result of a host of studies, European and American, to corroborate the generalization that the "upper classes" (economic, occupational, or political) are superior to the "lower classes" in a number of physical, mental, and vital qualities. The "upper classes" are taller, heavier, have greater cranial capacity, are more handsome, have fewer physical anomalies and defects, longer life, better health, and higher intelligence than the strata below them. However, it is conceded that this is a matter of difference in averages only, for there is "a great deal of overlapping." These correlations are claimed to be "permanent and universal," existing not only in contemporary societies, but in historical societies of the past, and among primitives—except during periods of "decay." Shape of head and pigmentation do not show this correlation with class standing. Statistical criteria of significance for the relationships revealed in these studies are not presented. For some of the more theoretically dubious correlations, as, for instance, head size or cranial capacity and intellectual ability (as an indication of the correlation between these factors and class), Sorokin mentions briefly studies which reveal no such correlations, but dismisses them just as briefly as being improperly conducted.<sup>80</sup> This technique is convenient but hardly convincing. Nevertheless, many of the correlations for contemporary Western societies are suggestively documented. His projection of these correlations backward into history is largely speculative and deductive and based on arresting but not indisputable exercises of logic.

The crucial question involved in these correlations, beyond that of their authenticity, is, of course, whether they are due to

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

heredity or environment. Sorokin faces this question in a separate chapter and states that a part of the superiority of the upper classes is due to superior environmental factors. For instance, he points to the role of diet in influencing height and weight, and to that of better education in developing intellectual ability.<sup>81</sup> However, he concludes that hereditary factors of selection in producing the upper strata must be credited with producing part of the differences. No quantitative answer is provided that would indicate the respective proportional influences of nature and nurture.

Sorokin also documents a lower birth rate for the "upper classes" in contemporary Western society as compared with the "lower classes."<sup>82</sup> And, finally, he essays a psychological theory of aristocracy:

. . . except during the period of decay, the upper strata are composed of persons possessed of strong ambitions, bold and adventurous characters, with inventive minds, with harsh and non-sentimental natures, with a sort of cynicism and, finally, with a will for domination and power. . . . Hence, insincerity, cynicism, manipulation of ideas and convictions are necessary prerequisites for successful climbing. . . . When the aristocracy of a society begins to decay, these traits begin to disappear within the upper strata. They become timid, human, soft, and sincere.<sup>83</sup>

This principle is illustrated by the selection of a number of prominent rulers and leaders of the past, and a characterization of them as possessing these requisite traits. Needless to say, no statistical confirmation is attempted. However, the functions of ruling, conquest, money-making, leadership, etc., are adduced as requiring these traits. No mention is made of persons of historical renown

<sup>81</sup> Missing here, however, is an extended and well-documented analysis of the role of environmental factors in influencing I. Q. scores, as is found, for instance, in Otto Klineberg, *Race Differences* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), and, more recently, in Kenneth Eells and Others, *Intelligence and Cultural Differences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

<sup>82</sup> It is interesting to note that this "difference" is not presented in his series of chapters which deal with the characteristics of the "upper" and "lower" strata, but appears in another connection. Perhaps the reason is that it does not fit neatly into the superiority-inferiority framework in which these chapters are written.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 308-10. (Author's italics omitted).

and attainment who have not necessarily been "cynical" and "insincere," nor of varying cultural contexts which bring varying qualities of leadership to the surface. Sorokin reveals here questionable confidence in interpreting the most intimate aspects of remote history, and an occasional penchant for leaping from an illustration to a generalization.

*Ascertainment.* The problem of ascertainment arises in *Social Mobility* in the selection of studies which throw light on the questions of class characteristics and degree of social mobility. On the whole, the studies which Sorokin presents and summarizes are based on divisions of the population along the lines of his three-fold division of economic, occupational, and political stratification, particularly the first two. Thus Niceforo's study of the relationship of economic position to height among the children of Lausanne is based on the two categories "wealthy" and "poor." We are not told what the actual economic criteria were, or where the dividing line was established. Roberts's study of the same relationship for English adults, ages twenty to thirty, contains the occupational categories "Professions," "Commercial class," "Laborers working out-of-doors," "Artisans living in the town," "Sedentary laborers," "Lunatics," and "Prisoners." These categories are assumed to represent a descending order of status and power. The numerous other studies which Sorokin calls upon, in general, follow these types of classification. It is taken for granted that the investigators had accurate methods of determining the individuals who belonged in each category.<sup>84</sup> A considerable number of the studies were performed in the late nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, and are of European groups.

*Social Mobility.*<sup>85</sup> Sorokin's conceptual scheme of social mobility is, on the whole, a useful and consistent one. Individuals or "social objects and values" may be socially mobile—that is, may move from one social position to another. He is, however, largely concerned with the movement of individuals. There are two

<sup>84</sup> Possibly the full monograph in each case (from which Sorokin presents only summary data) contains fuller information on this point.

<sup>85</sup> See, particularly, chaps. vii, viii, ix, xiv-xxii.

principal types of social mobility: horizontal, where movement does not involve a change of level, and vertical, where the individual shifts from one social stratum (economic, occupational, or political) to another. In turn, vertical mobility may be "ascending" or "descending." Furthermore, either separate individuals or entire groups may move. Quantitatively, vertical social mobility has two dimensions: "intensiveness," that is, the number of strata crossed upward or downward, in a given period of time; and "generality," the number or proportion of individuals who have moved, vertically, in a definite period of time. Finally, "combining" (possibly multiplying) the figure for intensiveness with the figure for relative generality in one of the three fields (e.g., the economic) gives the "aggregate index" of vertical mobility for that field of a given society at a given time.

Social mobility is accomplished through various "channels." These channels have historically been the social "institutions" of the army, the church, the school, politics, wealth-making, professional organizations, and the family. Various societies emphasize particular institutions as channels of vertical mobility. Moreover, these institutions act as "mechanisms of social testing" or "sieves" which "sift, select, and distribute the individuals within different social strata or positions." The qualities tested for vary with different societies, and the efficiency of the "testing mechanism" also varies. If the qualities selected for are "poor and wrong" or the testing mechanism functions improperly, society suffers. The inheritance of power and position through the family is given the status of a "testing" device because it is claimed that origin from a prominent and "good" family makes probable a good heredity and a good education. This appears to beg the question. The school in contemporary Western countries is attacked because it does not select for "moral" qualities. Surveying history, Sorokin concludes that social mobility mechanisms have been, on the whole, satisfactorily functional:

Though there has scarcely existed any society in which the distribution of individuals has been quite perfect, in complete accordance with the rule, "Everybody must be placed according to his ability," nevertheless, many societies have existed for a long time and this very fact means that their mechanism of social testing, selecting, and distrib-



uting their members has not been wholly bad and has performed its function in a more or less satisfactory way.<sup>86</sup>

What are the general causes of social mobility? In order to explain these, Sorokin first lists the general causes of social stratification. These are (a) "the fact of living together," by which he means the necessity for social organization to have governors and governed, leaders and led; (b) innate physical and mental differences among individuals; and (c) environmental differences which develop individuals differently, and thus produce inequalities in the struggle for possessions and power. The causes or "factors" of vertical social mobility which operate to modify or change the social stratification of a given society are listed as follows: (a) demographic factors—a lower birth rate or higher mortality rate of the upper classes in comparison with the lower classes, creating a "social vacuum" which must be filled by "upstarts" from below; (b) dissimilarity of parents and children—occasionally, intelligent parents from the upper classes may have unintelligent or average children, and, conversely, unintelligent or average parents from the lower classes may have superior children, in which case the "testing mechanism" will operate to change the relative social positions of these children; (c) changes of the environment, especially the social environment—one set of conditions may facilitate the ascendance of the military man whereas a shift in conditions may effect the social descent of the military leader and the rise of the businessman to power. These factors "break the existing equilibrium" and make vertical social mobility inevitable. However, they do not always function perfectly; the channels of social mobility may become clogged, and this results in a defective social distribution of individuals. That is, at any given time, individuals may not have been properly sifted by the "testing mechanisms." This means that many individuals will be in positions unsuitable to their natural abilities and will be unable or unwilling to change. Moreover, changing conditions may produce a "lag" between the qualities possessed by those at the top of the hierarchy and those new qualities demanded by the new circumstances. Both of these conditions, says Sorokin, may in extreme cases lead to revolution.

<sup>86</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 182.



Sorokin attempts to discover the amount ("intensiveness" and "generality") of vertical social mobility in contemporary Western societies, but admits that the data are scattered, fragmentary, and few. He reviews the existing literature of occupational, economic, and political mobility, and comes to several tentative and non-quantitative conclusions. The more salient ones may be summarized as follows: there is some dispersion of children into different occupational, economic, and political strata from those of their fathers; all of the occupational, economic, and political groups are recruited from offspring of "the most different" groups. However, there is still considerable hereditary transmission of these strata positions. For instance, "the children of common laborers enter principally occupations of unskilled and skilled labor. Only a relatively small part of them succeed in entering the higher professional occupations, becoming managers and owners of big business enterprises. On the other hand, the children of the professionals and successful business men, in a great majority, enter the professional and business and privileged occupations."<sup>87</sup> The greater the number of strata to be crossed, the smaller is the number of individuals who move, upward or downward. The middle strata are more stable than the extreme ones. Movement is both upward and downward. For the majority of socially mobile individuals, movement is gradual rather than in "jumps" or "skips." During periods of social upheaval such as war, revolution, or rapid industrial change, social mobility increases in volume and intensiveness. In his over-all assessment of these data, Sorokin seems to lean toward the point of view that generally "all is well" with the channels of social mobility in contemporary Western society, at least if one is patient enough to look at the problem from the perspective of several generations.

Again, for lack of sufficient available data, Sorokin does not provide us with an over-all quantitative answer to what is, in part, at least, a quantitative problem. As to the point where impatience with the degree of openness of the channels of social mobility is called for, this would seem to be in part a matter of value-judgments, and there will be those who will not regard con-

<sup>87</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 439.

temporary mobility conditions in Western society as all that could be desired.

Sorokin draws up a balance sheet of the effects of social mobility, indicating what he regards to be its favorable and unfavorable aspects. Again, we are presented a series of generalizations drawn variously from a selection of illustrations from history, dubious historical statistical data—for instance, “In the fourteenth century, the highest number of births of men of letters [in France] falls in the period from 1376 to 1400 (annual average number being 0.86, instead of 0.50, 0.78, and 0.56 during the first three-quarters of the century)”<sup>88</sup>—and a few items of more creditable contemporary research. Social mobility is usually accompanied by a differential birth rate which favors the procreation of the lower classes and tends to deplete the abler aristocracy, thus “wasting” the best human material. It increases mental strain and raises the rate of mental disease. It increases “superficiality” and decreases sensitiveness of the nervous system, fosters skepticism and cynicism, decreases social intimacy, and increases psychological isolation. It raises the suicide rate and leads to a “hunt” for sensual pleasures and the disintegration of morals. It finally results in the decline and disintegration of the “culture complex” which characterizes a civilization. On the other hand, social mobility reduces narrowmindedness, facilitates inventions and discoveries, and stimulates intellectual life. Under some conditions it facilitates a better and more adequate social distribution of individuals than an immobile society. It leads to economic prosperity and social progress. The generalizations are large and sweeping, and usually unqualified by a consideration of special factors or restriction to a particular cultural situation. Sorokin does not balance the books himself, but confesses that he “likes the mobile type of society,” and prophesies that “our mobile period is far from ended.” However, the greater weight of his remarks seems to be somewhat critical of and hostile to mobile societies.

*Ethnic Stratification.* There is little discussion in *Social Mobility* of the relationship of ethnic factors to stratification, classes, and mobility. In one passage Sorokin advances the principle that

<sup>88</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 513.

"conditions which contribute to an innate heterogeneity of a people" facilitate social stratification, but this principle is not illustrated. He rejects the theory of Nordic racial superiority in discussing the relationship between dolichocephalism and blondness to ability and achievement. And in documenting vertical mobility in Western society he advances data taken from the reports of the United States Immigration Commission of 1911, showing the rise of the children of immigrants in America to an occupational and economic distribution which is more like that of the native born of native parentage than that of their immigrant parents. Apparently Negroes are included in the "native born of native parents" group, which somewhat lessens the comparative value of the table.<sup>89</sup> There is no specific discussion in the volume of the American Negro.

*Social Mobility* must be considered a major addition to the class literature of American sociology of the twenties, attempting as it did the crystallization of the fields of social stratification and social mobility. Its most valuable contribution, to this writer's mind, was analytical. It ranged too far and wide in time and space, perhaps, to induce confidence in some of the author's sweeping generalizations. But it also raised many pertinent questions concerning contemporary society where the admitted paucity of existing research indicated the need for further inquiry. Its failure to lead directly to a series of investigations based on Sorokin's conceptual scheme was due to other forces at work which were beginning to inspire an approach to the study of class phenomena through a fuller-bodied technique which Sorokin did not seem to envisage—the field study of separate communities.

<sup>89</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 442.

## Social Class in Middletown

In the two Middletown volumes,<sup>1</sup> the Lynds turned a searching analytical mirror to the face of America. Those who cared to look might see how the interwoven strands of American institutional life were responding to the successive shocks of industrialization, boom, and depression, all coming well within the life span of one generation—or, at least, how these responses appeared to a group of social scientists using the techniques and viewpoint of the cultural anthropologist<sup>2</sup> for the intensive study of an American community.

The community chosen was “Middletown,” a Midwestern industrial city of about 38,000 population in 1924-25 when the field work for the first report was carried out. Of course, many facets of American life would not be encountered in this sampling—those peculiar to large metropolitan communities, large-scale ethnic relationships, and farm life. But, for a manageable “baseline” investigation of “middle-of-the-road” America, encompassing the observation of institutional change and the structure and processes of community life, Middletown appeared suitable.

<sup>1</sup> Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929); and *Middletown in Transition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937).

<sup>2</sup> Clark Wissler, American anthropologist, wrote the foreword to *Middletown*, and characterized it as “a pioneer attempt to deal with a sample American community after the manner of social anthropology.” The Lynds state their adherence to “the approach of the cultural anthropologist” in chapter i.



The Middletown studies are organized around three research foci, of which class analysis is one. The other two are institutional functioning and social change. Community activities in Middletown, as in other cultures, are viewed by the Lynds as involving six major institutional complexes or life-activities: (a) the economic—"getting a living"; (b) the family—"making a home"; (c) education—"training the young"; (d) leisure—play-activities; (e) religion; and (f) community activities—government, "caring for the unable," "getting information," etc. The three points in the time dimension of social change are 1890, 1925, and 1935. The first study, made in the middle twenties, attempted to gauge the effect of rapid industrialization (Middletown's three principal industries are glass, automobile parts, and foundries) and growth on a small community with essentially a rural background and orientation. The second study, carried out in the middle thirties, focused on the effects of the sequential pattern of boom and depression on an already industrialized community. The structure of the community is analyzed as consisting, essentially, of a two-class system, and attempts are made to distinguish the processes and experiences of Middletown life as they are differentially encountered by the respective classes. However, many of the facts and deductions relating to Middletown institutions and their changing expression are given in terms of general formulations for Middletown without specific class differentiation. In other words, the Lynds are interested in portraying the "ethos" of Middletown, as well as the uneven movement of its class segments. In this sense, the Middletown reports must be distinguished from the Warner studies, for instance, which have class structure as their major and primary focus, and which, in addition, have no time dimension.

Working with a total field staff of five in the first study and six in the second, the Lynds utilized the techniques of participant observation, interviews (formal and informal), examination of documentary material (as, for instance, census data, school records, newspaper reports and editorials), initial compilation of statistical data, and questionnaires. Generalizations for the 1890 period are admitted to be less valid than those for later periods because of the necessarily fragmentary nature of the data for this

earlier period. Intensive class analysis is, in general, confined to the later periods.

*Definition: Stratification Variables.* The Lynds' basic definition of class is an occupational one, with economic differences implicit. In the first Middletown study, the population is divided into a "Working Class" and a "Business Class." Members of the Working Class "address their activities in getting their living primarily to *things*, utilizing material tools in the making of things and the performance of services," while the members of the Business Class "address their activities predominantly to *people* in the selling or promotion of things, services, and ideas."<sup>3</sup> Professionals such as lawyers and doctors are included with the business class because "it is the business interests of the city that dominate and give their tone, in the main, to the lawyer, chemist, architect, engineer, teacher, and even to some extent preacher and doctor."<sup>4</sup>

The Lynds note that they considered using the threefold division into Lower Class, Middle Class, and Upper Class, but rejected it for the following reasons:

(1) Since the dominance of the local getting-a-living activities impresses upon the group a pattern of social stratification based primarily upon vocational activity, it seemed advisable to utilize terms that hold this vocational cleavage to the fore.

(2) In so far as the traditional three-fold classification might be applied to Middletown, today, the city would have to be regarded as having only a lower and a middle class; eight or nine households might conceivably be considered as an upper class, but these families are not a group apart but are merged in the life of the mass of business-folk.<sup>5</sup>

It is admitted that gradations exist within these two groups and that there is some overlapping, but the division is defended in terms of its larger, over-all functional significance:

Were a minute structural diagram the aim of this study, it would be necessary to decipher in much greater detail the multitude of overlapping groupings observable in Middletown. Since what is sought,

<sup>3</sup> *Middletown*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

however, is an understanding of the major functional characteristics of this changing culture, it is important that significant outlines be not lost in detail, and the groups in the city which exhibit the dominant characteristics most clearly must, therefore, form the foci of the report. While an effort will be made to make clear at certain points variant behavior within these two groups, it is after all this division into working class and business class that constitutes the outstanding cleavage in Middletown.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the body of the first Middletown report there is an occasional reference to "the lower ranks of the business class," "the less prosperous business group," or "the working man with more money," but, in general, the class analysis in the first study is performed on the basis of the twofold division of working class and business class.

The dynamics of stratification are plainly conceived by the Lynds throughout the Middletown studies as a function of power relationships, with the business class in a position of dominance over the working class. They make it quite clear that the key factor in this dominance is to be regarded as economic power, measured by income, expenditures, and wealth. And yet they seem to take the correlation between occupational position and income for granted, for this correlation is not spelled out in either of the Middletown volumes. That is, we are not given comparative figures on the range, median, or mean incomes of the business and working classes, either for total populations or representative samples. The authors do present annual income figures for a sample of 100 working-class families in 1924, which showed a range from \$344.50 to \$3,460.00, with a median of, roughly, \$1,500.00; but corresponding data for the business class sample are not given. This omission appears to stem, according to the authors' statement, from a greater reluctance on the part of the business class to discuss their occupational life and financial status with the interviewers. However, they compare the median figure of \$1,500 for the working class sample with the \$1,900 (roughly) figure which was the minimum cost of living for "a standard family of five" in Middletown in 1924, based on a budget made out by the United States Bureau of Labor and computed at Mid-

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

dletown prices. In other indirect ways the Lynds support the thesis that the working class cut the small per capita share of the economic pie at the time of their studies. In the middle 1920's periodic unemployment, and thus curtailment of income, is shown to be a problem largely of the working class. And in the second study the need for bare cash relief benefits to meet the effects of the depression is associated with the working class.<sup>7</sup> Also, in their discussion of patterns of consumption and type of home lived in, the Lynds substantiate the lesser economic power of the working class. Nevertheless, one might wish that this extremely important point of the relationship between occupational position and economic power had been taken less for granted and demonstrated more directly and in more detail. Particularly would this procedure have thrown some light on the interplay of these two variables at the upper end of the working-class curve and the lower end of the array of business-class people.<sup>8</sup>

In the second and later Middletown study, the Lynds continue to use the twofold business and working class division as the framework of much of their investigation, but provide at selected points more intensive analysis of divisions within each of these groups. An entire chapter is devoted to the influence and activities of the "X" family which, through its great wealth, extensive industrial holdings, and long-time Middletown residence, is shown to dominate Middletown community life. Here the authors distinguish the emergence of an "upper business class" over the preceding decade, an emergence which is partly a function of the city's growth in size and partly the result of the development of a somewhat self-conscious social set around the younger members of the "X" family. This new, wealthy elite is described as having distinctive patterns of leisure, characterized by horseback riding and aeroplanes, as being ecologically concentrated, and as moving towards social exclusiveness.

In their analysis of power relationships in the community, in the later study, the Lynds also use the term "business control

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, *Middletown in Transition*, pp. 127-28.

<sup>8</sup> Also, it need hardly be pointed out that with the rise in power of organized labor in the mid-fifties, an investigator could even less afford to take for granted a neat relationship between a working- and business-class division and income—again, particularly, at the higher and lower ends of the respective curves.



group" frequently to mark off the wealthier and more powerful members of the business group. They indicate that the coming of "big business" to Middletown, in the form of plants owned by large, nationwide corporations, has further complicated the picture. They refer to the distinction between the "old" middle class composed of small-scale manufacturers and merchants and the "new" middle class made up of salaried employees of the large corporations.<sup>9</sup>

Middletown traditions, according to the Lynds, are those of the "old" middle class, but the expanding interests of a few of the local manufacturers and the arrival of "big business" are tending to form new alignments. The authors in the final pages of the second study set up a sixfold class system to characterize the Middletown of 1935:

1. A very small top group of the "old" middle class is becoming an upper class, consisting of wealthy local manufacturers, bankers, the local head managers of one or two of the national corporations with units in Middletown, and a few well-to-do dependents of all the above, including one or two outstanding lawyers. (This class is largely identical with the group referred to throughout as the business control group and also with the group setting new and expensive standards in use of leisure.)

2. Below this first group is to be found a larger but still relatively small group, consisting of established smaller manufacturers, merchants, and professional folk (Middletown's outstanding "old" middle-class members in Corey's sense) and also of most of the better-paid salaried dependents of the city's big-business interests (the "new" middle class of the favored administrative caste within Corey's scheme) . . . .

3. Below Groups 1 and 2 come those who have been identified above as Middletown's own middle class in purely locally relative terms; the minor employed professionals, the very small retailers and entrepreneurs, clerks, clerical workers, small salesmen, civil servants. . . .

4. Close to Group 3 might be discerned an aristocracy of local labor: trusted foremen, building trades craftsmen of long standing,

<sup>9</sup> See Lewis Corey, *The Crisis of the Middle Class* (New York: Covici-Friede, 1935), for a discussion of this distinction. For a more recent analysis, see C. Wright Mills, *White Collar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951).

and the pick of the city's experienced highly skilled machinists of the sort who send their children to the local college as a matter of course.

5. On a fifth level would stand the numerically overwhelmingly dominant group of the working class; these are the semi-skilled or unskilled workers, including machine operatives, truckmen, laborers, the mass of wage earners.

6. Below Group 5 one should indicate the ragged bottom margin, comprising some "poor whites" from the Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia mountains, and in general the type of white worker who lives in the ramshackle, unpainted cottages on the outlying unpaved streets. These are the unskilled workers who cannot even boast of that last prop to the job status of the unskilled; regular employment when a given plant is operating.<sup>10</sup>

Here, we have indicated then, an upper class, two layers of a middle class, and three layers of a lower class, distinguished by a combination of occupational and economic factors. This sixfold classification, however, is of considerably less functional importance in the Lynds' analysis than the twofold business-class and working-class scheme.

The Lynds regard the occupational-economic complex as the decisive factor in class definition. Other factors such as psychological feelings of status, group life, and community power relationships appear to be viewed as dependent variables which are functions of the division on occupation-economic lines.

In the realm of status feelings, the authors' principal thesis is that the working class in Middletown, even during the depression, has developed no tangible "corporate class consciousness," whatever their real (as distinguished from their felt) interests might be. The traditional American ideology of "free enterprise," "individualism," "classless or middle-class society," "anybody can get ahead if he works hard and saves" is adhered to both by the working class and the business class. The conservative rural background of many of Middletown's industrial workers contributes to their adherence to this set of beliefs. And the business class is described as keeping the symbols of this ideology continually before the working class through its dominance of such channels of public opinion formation as the press and education. Although

<sup>10</sup> *Middletown in Transition*, pp. 458-60.

the experiences of the workers with long periods of unemployment and with work and direct relief during the depression led to feelings of insecurity and disillusionment, the Lynds declare that these feelings have constituted for each worker largely an *individual* experience rather than one interpreted in a *class* framework. Thus the result has been occasional personal resentment but not identification with a militant cause.<sup>11</sup> The failure of the workers to act concertedly and spiritedly to break the open-shop pattern of Middletown's industries during the early thirties when initial opportunities presented themselves, and their negligible support for any of the "radical" third party candidates in the 1936 presidential election are presented as partial evidence in support of this thesis. (In the 1936 election, over 31 per cent of the voters in definitely working class districts in Middletown actually voted for Landon.)

As a result of depression experiences and New Deal policies, Middletown labor is found to be slowly developing an amorphous view of itself as a group in the later period. But the Lynds discern no real class consciousness on the part of the working class in Middletown. The business class, on the other hand, particularly at the top levels, they find to be acting in concert on many local issues as, for instance, in the maintenance of an "open shop" labor policy in the community, and they find this class achieving effective organization through such agencies and devices as the Chamber of Commerce and control of credit. The Lynds' interpretation of the motives of members of the business class is not in terms of personal malevolence, particularly, but rather that this class tends to identify public welfare with its own welfare. As for the subjective adherences of the six class groupings distinguished above, we are told that Groups 1, 2, and 3 (the upper and two middle groups) identify together as being of the business world, over against the working class groups, 4, 5, and 6. But the position of Group 3, the "lower-salaried middle class" is indicated as being somewhat insecure. Its members cling to their white-collar status with intensity and are regarded with "neighborly tolerance" but not accepted wholeheartedly by Groups 1 and 2.

The Lynds have no systematic discussion of status feelings

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.



on a class basis outside of the question of "corporate class consciousness," although from scattered references and evidence one puts together a picture which indicates "generalized class awareness" in Middletown—that is, feelings of participation in groups of superior and inferior status. An elaborate system of social clubs and standards of conspicuous display in the local high school, the ecological separation of the classes (to be discussed below), the separation of adult associations by class, and the growing realization on the part of the members of the working class that the path of upward mobility is becoming steeper and more difficult are factors which contribute to this class awareness. However, the authors appear to be primarily interested in the power relationships between classes rather than the subjective reciprocal feelings of status, which they seem to regard as secondary factors.

The delineation of the "political" power structure, broadly conceived, constitutes one of the central accomplishments of class analysis in the Middletown studies. The Lynds are particularly concerned with the operation of community controls which stem from economic power and ramify to the government, the press, education, and even the church. Their basic thesis is that the upper brackets of the business class, by virtue of their superior economic and status position, exercised control, in direct and indirect ways, over basic community activities in such a way as to suppress civic developments which threatened business-class goals. These broad goals of the business class in the Middletown of the twenties and thirties were the maintenance of an "open shop" labor policy, the functioning of "free enterprise" without government interference, and, in general, the continuance of a community-embraced ideology hostile to institutional change which threatened the economic *status quo*, or the business class's control of processes of social change.

The actual holders of public office in Middletown, the Lynds report, were not "top level" businessmen. Municipal salaries were small, relative to rewards in business, and high status was not associated with holding municipal office. The city official tended to be of the type "whom the inner business control group ignore economically and socially, and use politically."<sup>12</sup> Control

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321.



over the political machine was exercised by the business class by means of large campaign contributions and general influence in the life of the city. Its principal purpose was not graft (which was pictured as a supplementary reward to many of the officials themselves), but the maintenance of a community situation favorable to its own interests—interests which it identified, as a matter of course, with those of the general public.

As illustrations of this dominance of municipal government by "big business," the Lynds relate a number of incidents, many of them dealing with the determined efforts of Middletown manufacturers to put down any threat of large-scale union activity. For instance, a worker distributing handbills on a downtown street announcing an A. F. of L. organizational meeting was picked up by the police. Later, when members of the United Automobile Workers of America from a neighboring city came to Middletown to encourage union organization in the General Motors plant, the police ordered them out of town. When the General Motors plant returned to Middletown in 1935, after its depression close-down, and union organization seemed to threaten, the Middletown police force suddenly became augmented without explanation, a local police officer was made head of the General Motors private police force, and a close relationship was set up between the city and the company forces.<sup>13</sup> Another incident concerns a sewage disposal project for the community recommended by the State Board of Health and about to be financed by a Federal grant. According to community sources, this grant was opposed by the "X" family, and, as a result of their influence, was rejected by the City Council.

Although the business class was successful in keeping collective bargaining out of Middletown's factories for a time, it was not so successful in influencing the course of the presidential election in 1936, although this was apparently not for want of effort. Normally a Republican stronghold in national elections, in that year Middletown returned a 59.1 per cent majority for Roosevelt. Aside from the question of control over the channels of information and public opinion formation which were almost exclusively pro-Landon, some of the leaders of Middletown busi-

<sup>13</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

ness tried more direct methods to defeat "that man in the White House." According to a "reliable and informed source," local factory owners and managers tried to exert pressure on their employees to vote Republican. For instance, the "X" glass plant "practically forced" its employees to wear Landon buttons. It is indicated, however, that tactics such as these aroused unfavorable reactions among the workers and were not conspicuously successful.<sup>14</sup>

Patterns and evidence of business-class control of the principal channels of public information presented by the Lynds may be summarized in part as follows: Both daily newspapers in Middletown were Republican<sup>15</sup> in political affiliation. Although the morning paper was the more conservative of the two, the editorial policy of both papers had consistently been opposed to collective bargaining, the organization of labor, and government "interference" in business. Their news columns and headlines were slanted against labor. As with other newspapers, the major portion of their revenue was obtained from advertisers (members of the business class) rather than circulation, and the Lynds declared in their earlier study that the community took it for granted that the newspapers, while providing the news as best they could, must not offend their advertisers. The "X" family had a "controlling" stock interest in the morning paper. Both papers were dependent on the "X"-controlled bank for credit. On one occasion in the twenties, at a time of local unemployment, the newspapers were persuaded by business interests not to accept employment advertisements from neighboring cities in order that an ample supply of skilled labor be kept in town.<sup>16</sup> Adverse news about members of prominent business-class families as, for instance, arrests for drunkenness, was usually suppressed or treated in special fashion. In 1936 the press carried on a vitriolic campaign against Roosevelt and the New Deal. The increased use of syndicated political columnists after 1925 meant only intensification of the business-class point of view, because of the selection of columnists. In 1935, when the A. F. of L. tried to organize Middletown's auto-

<sup>14</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 360-62.

<sup>15</sup> A Democratic weekly, owned and edited by an "old-style" independent journalist, maintained a small circulation.

<sup>16</sup> *Middletown*, pp. 58-59.

motive workers, the local radio station, after initial arrangements had been concluded, suddenly refused to carry an address by the labor union representative. The "X" family, through their connections with the school board, Masonic Temple, and local college, controlled all the large meeting halls in Middletown.

The institution of education, the Lynds report, was also more or less under business-class control—a control which became more self-conscious and apparent as a result of the uneasiness generated by the depression. The president of Middletown's school board was a member of the "X" family, and a prominent "X" attorney was school attorney. The "X" family, through its large donations, was largely responsible for the resurgence of the local state teachers' college, which now bears the "X" name, and according to community reports exercised considerable influence on the policies of the institution to the effect that left-of-center views on its campus were discouraged.<sup>17</sup> According to the Lynds, however, all liberal teaching was not stifled at this college, which, in the thirties, was drawing about three-fourths of Middletown's college entrants. Public school teachers, it is declared, had to face the same community pressures against dissenting and liberal views at the risk of losing their jobs. The role of the D.A.R. in generating these pressures is cited as being a salient one.

On the basis of their analysis of sermons and interviews with ministers, the Lynds conclude that, with a few exceptions, the church and its related agencies in Middletown presented the business-class point of view on controversial issues, spoke of them in generalities, or avoided them altogether. This would apply to such topics as internationalism, disarmament, pacifism, labor organization, social planning, the redistribution of wealth, civil liberties, amending the Constitution, socialized medicine, and birth control.<sup>18</sup> Here again, among other influences the special role of the "X" family is noted. Both the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. buildings (among other church philanthropies) were contributed to the community by the "X" family, and the Lynds report that personnel and policies at both the Y's were closely controlled by members of this family. They declare that most ministers hesi-

<sup>17</sup> See *Middletown in Transition*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>18</sup> See *Middletown*, p. 79, and *Middletown in Transition*, pp. 312-13.



tated to oppose openly causes or points of view supported by this powerful family group.

Such, in brief fashion, is the picture presented by the Lynds of the network of overlapping controls by which the higher levels of the business class promoted their own goals and maintained a minimum of institutional change in Middletown. What they seem to be saying is that economic power relationships in a free enterprise economy tend to ramify to other areas of community life, and the other institutions of the community, in the last analysis answerable in practice to the same economic criteria, become subordinated to the sources of greater economic power. Those who have benefited most by the exact shape of the given institutional structure are thus in a position to manipulate community values and affairs so as to forestall any possible changes in that structure which are unfavorable to their own interests. While the exact applicability of this hypothesis is a matter of degree, and while its full documentation presents many difficulties, depending as it does, in part, on anecdotal material, the researcher's interpretation, and data which those most closely involved are likely to be unwilling to provide, the Lynds' analysis and evidence are more than suggestive. At any rate, their presentation demonstrates that this problem is a crucial one in class research. However, it should be noted that the recent rise of countervailing power on the part of labor through increased political activity and the development of a strong collective bargaining pattern and powerful unions calls for some reinterpretation of the exact nature of the system of power relationships in an industrialized American community today.

*Associated Variables.* "So the two worlds live; to each one the other is largely out of the picture."<sup>19</sup> In this sentence, the Lynds summarize what they make abundantly clear throughout the Middletown studies—that the working class and the business class lived in substantially separate social systems which touched mainly in symbiotic fashion in the business of making a living and in the schools. The existence of separate group life by class is demonstrated at many points.

<sup>19</sup> *Middletown*, p. 478.



First of all, there was an ecological base to this separation. Substantiating the well-known folklore dividing line of social differences, the railroad tracks running through the center of the city served roughly to separate the homes of the business class on the North Side from the humbler dwellings of the workers on the South Side.<sup>20</sup> The authors do not subdivide the South Side, but the "upper business class" is shown to locate in a specific portion of the North Side. In 1925 this was "the aristocratic old East End," but by 1935, stimulated by real-estate developments created by the "X" family, the locus of the upper class had shifted to the Western portion of the North Side, in the vicinity of the rapidly expanding college (an expansion also induced by grants from the "X" family).

Associational life is pictured as being well divided on class lines. Churches are referred to, usually, as either "business class churches" or "working class churches." Men's lodges are similarly divided, and as for the civic clubs such as Rotary and Kiwanis, these are indicated to be for businessmen only. Women's clubs show the same class-divided pattern, and the literary and artistic study clubs which dominate the women's "social" life of the community are a business-class phenomenon only. Only rarely is there reference to a church or club as having both working-class and business-class members.<sup>21</sup> In general, the business class is shown to have a more varied and elaborated associational system than the working class. Nonassociational patterns of leisure are also discussed separately by class, with the implication that rarely, if ever, did business- and working-class people entertain each other in their homes or come together in their play activities. More direct information on this point, however, would have been desirable.

Seven out of the twelve public elementary schools in Middletown in 1925 were classified by the Lynds as being "markedly" either business class or working class, while five were well mixed.

<sup>20</sup> The fact of this ecological division appeared to be well understood by many residents of Middletown, so that the terms "North Side" and "South Side" were used by them as oblique references to class divisions.

<sup>21</sup> The Lynds note also that the members of the emergent "upper class" group by 1935 were beginning to resign from the country club and to confine some of their affairs to their own riding clubs. (*Middletown in Transition*, p. 249, n. 8).

At the one public high school the students were reported to be divided by class lines into competitive social groups where the working-class students were handicapped because they could not keep up with the prevailing standards of dress. Some of the girls left school for this reason.<sup>22</sup> Children of the emergent upper class went to "Eastern schools," although we are not told whether this was at the elementary and secondary level or for college work. The incidence of marriage across class lines, another crucial index of the degree of existence of separate group life, is not mentioned by the Lynds, although they report that business-class mothers were careful to encourage their children to confine their intersex friendships to the "right" people.

Throughout the Middletown studies we may note the existence of differential cultural behavior patterns and life experiences for the two major classes distinguished. Two behavior patterns which have a peculiar significance for class analysis because of their presumable index value on first meeting are dress and speech.<sup>23</sup> The Lynds' attention to both of these patterns is not extensive. In 1925 they noted sharp competition in dress among girls in the high school. Working-class mothers, they point out, were under pressure to provide their daughters with silk stockings and dresses, rather than the less expensive cotton and lisle. However, the implication here is that only finances (as differentiated from standards of taste) stood in the way of the working-class girls dressing like the daughters of the business class. There is little on the possible existence of class patterns of dress for men. As for speech patterns, the Lynds do not devote any systematic discussion to differences by class, but indicate the existence of such differences in the verbatim reports of remarks obtained in interviews. This indication appears in the departures from "correct" grammar and, occasionally, pronunciation found in the remarks of working class respondents. Typical departures are as follows: "ain't," "he don't," the use of the double negative, e.g., "I don't approve of no socials," "I didn't have no time," and the omission

<sup>22</sup> See *Middletown*, pp. 163-64 and *Middletown in Transition*, p. 452.

<sup>23</sup> Possibly a third pattern—something which might be called "manner"—is of comparable rapid index value; although it is a difficult pattern to describe and differentiate. Cf. the "social ritual" in the discussion of *The Gold Coast and the Slum*, in chap. ii.

of the "g" in the pronunciation of words ending in "ing," e.g., "thinkin'," "expectin'," "nothin',"<sup>24</sup> It is also noted that there was a tendency for different terms to be used by working-class and business women in referring to their husbands to the interviewer. Working class women spoke of "my old man," "the man," "he" (indicated as most frequent), and "the mister," while business class wives used the terms "my husband," or "Mr. Jones."<sup>25</sup> Possible dress and speech differences between Middletown's "upper class" of the middle 1930's and the rest of the business class are rarely referred to.

Many differences in the life experiences and cultural patterns of the respective classes defined by the Lynds are, of course, directly related to the economic differential, as, for instance, size, adequacy, cleanliness, and conveniences of the family dwelling, amount of needed medical care received, and amount of education given to children, which are described as varying directly with class position. Among other differences in the area of family life: the working-class sample in 1925 had more children and showed considerably less use of effective contraceptive devices (in many cases, none at all) than the business-class group. Divorce, according to the Lynds' legal informants, was more prevalent in the working class than the business class. Business-class women spent more time and thought on the care and rearing of their children than did working-class mothers. Patterns of leisure are shown to differ by class, including number and types of periodicals and books read. Religious fundamentalism and religious fervor in general are described by the authors as being more characteristic of working-class than business-class people, whereas among the business class they find church membership regarded as generally proper and necessary, and, in some cases, considered an asset in business. The working class received less satisfaction from its work (which was growing increasingly mechanical), had a far higher rate of vocational accidents, lived in more constant fear of unemployment, and was more favorably receptive to the New Deal than the business class.

*Ascertainment.* Since the Lynds' basic class division is an

<sup>24</sup> See particularly *Middletown*, chaps. xx and xxii.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118, n. 12.

occupational one, the problem of ascertainment in the Middletown studies is a fairly simple one of finding out a person's occupation and then assigning him either to the working class or business class in terms of the defining criterion of whether he works primarily with *things* or with *people*. As noted above, all professional people are grouped with the business class. Using 1920 United States Census data on the occupation of the gainfully employed of Middletown, the authors, in the first study, place 29.4 per cent in the business class and 70.6 per cent in the working class. It is admitted that some placement decisions in marginal or ambiguous cases were difficult.

In the first Middletown study, the Lynds used respective samples of business- and working-class families for formal interviewing with a standard schedule. The occupations of the heads of these families are listed, and fall within their definition of working and business class. The workers' sample consisted of 124 families, and the business class sample consisted of 40 families. However, the authors do not claim statistically significant results for data obtained from these samples:

... the groups are too small to allow heavy dependence on these data. Although members of the staff believe that the data secured from these families are in most cases widely representative of the two groups in Middletown, the claim is not made on the basis of these samples that "the business class" or "the working class" in Middletown does thus and so. Figures based upon them are purposely given in numbers rather than percentages, and probable error is omitted, to avoid any fallacious appearance of accuracy. They are offered not as absolute proof but as what are believed to be significant indices to the behavior of the community.<sup>26</sup>

This formal sampling technique was apparently not used in the second Middletown study, although it is reported that "scores of interviews," both formal and informal, were taken. In the later study, the Lynds make greater use of the ecological shortcut as a technique of class ascertainment. For instance, Middletown's presidential vote in 1936 is analyzed by "type of neighborhood"—that is, whether predominantly working class or business class.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix, Note on Method, p. 509.



In analysis of census figures, the occupational division is always kept in the forefront. The Lynds' problem of ascertainment is, of course, made easier by the fact that their stated purpose is not to give a "minute structural diagram" of Middletown but to study what they regard as the major cleavage. The occupational division used for this purpose is a relatively simple one and offers minimum difficulties in the problem of ascertainment. However, it should be noted that the absence of statistical estimates of significance for the interview data obtained in the first study and, even more saliently, the lack of a formal sampling technique in the second study place heavy burdens on the subjective impressions of the investigators in inferring "group" behavior and attitudes. In contrast, the documentation of communitywide events which demonstrate the power relationships of class is not subject to the same criticism.

*Social Mobility.* In the area of vertical social mobility, the Lynds allege the existence of a huge and widening gap between the traditional American ideology that hard work and thrift inevitably lead to economic and occupational rise and to "being one's own boss," and the actual realities of the situation in Middletown. According to the authors, the chance for an adult working-class male to rise to the business class, or even to the more desirable jobs in the working class, is small. In the first Middletown report they support this thesis with data from six Middletown plants showing that over a twenty-one-month period close to the time of the study the number of vacancies for the job of foreman were few, providing over this period of a year and three-fourths a chance for promotion for one worker in 424.<sup>27</sup> Other tendencies supporting this thesis are noted as follows: (a) the greater use of technically trained college men in the factories at levels above the foreman's job; (b) further developments in mechanization of factories which make a large capital investment increasingly necessary for setting up a manufacturing plant of one's own; and (c) the disadvantageous position of working class people in obtaining credit, relative to those in the lower levels of the business class,

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

which makes it more difficult for them to become small entrepreneurs.

After the 1935 survey, the Lynds report the continuation and accentuation of these trends. Census figures are presented which show that "skilled" jobs were losing out in proportion to the "semi-skilled" category, which actually involve the possession of little training and ability, thus decreasing the job security and bargaining position of greater numbers of workers. Moreover, while from 1920 to 1930 the number of wage earners in Middletown manufacturing plants increased by 9.6 per cent and foremen and overseers by only 5.2 per cent, largely college-trained personnel increased at a much faster rate, technical engineers increasing by 128 per cent, "chemists, assayers, and metallurgists" by 900 per cent, and managers and officials by 31.3 per cent. Size of manufacturing establishments and retail units as determined by number of employees also increased substantially during this period, thus continuing the trend for increasing need of large capital resources to go into business for one's self. The traditional ladder of opportunity in Middletown, the Lynds summarize, is now no longer one ladder, but two, because the rung leading from the foreman's job to business-class and professional positions in the plant, or to an independent business of one's own, is largely nonexistent. Thus the factory workers are cut off from the real ladder of opportunity which begins considerably above the plant floor for those with professional training or initial access to the business world.<sup>28</sup>

The *Middletown* authors indicated greater opportunities for upward social mobility for the children of working-class parents,<sup>29</sup> although this thesis is presented more or less incidentally, and its documentation is fragmentary and inconclusive. In the first report, there is reference to a new influx of working men's children

<sup>28</sup> See *Middletown in Transition*, pp. 44-73, for the Lynds' full discussion and documentation of these changing trends.

<sup>29</sup> It is an interesting commentary on attitudes in our culture that for many people the question of social mobility hinges on the opportunities for upward movement available to children, whatever the opportunities may be for the parent generation. Even a social scientist such as Sorokin focuses on this aspect, regarding the amount of social mobility as considerable if advance is made in given families over a number of generations. The Lynds, however, survey the relevance of the traditional American ideology of unlimited mobility more closely by focusing on the amount of social mobility open to the given adult generation.

into high school and college, but we are also informed that a number of children from working-class homes drop out at the high-school level for economic reasons. Questions on vocational preference given to 309 Middletown high school boys showed a "marked tendency among these children who have gone to high school, especially those of working class parents, to break away radically from the work of their fathers."<sup>30</sup> But, as the authors point out, this indicates preferences rather than accomplishment. The Lynds also asked the mothers in their working-class and business-class samples what plans they had for their children's education. Thirty-seven out of the forty business-class mothers planned on college for their children, whereas only 28 out of 124 working-class mothers had college plans in mind for their offspring, and in the latter responses the Lynds noted that expressions of concern about financial ability to effect the plans accompanied the statements. Working-class parents are pictured as being highly desirous of a college education for their children as an avenue of social and economic ascent, but the authors report some disillusionment with education on the part of both working-class parents and children as a result of the experiences of the depression. However, no data are presented which specify the actual volume or degree of upward mobility achieved by working class children.

*Ethnic Stratification.* By explicit and stated design, the Middletown studies did not concern themselves in major fashion with the role of ethnic groups in the community. One of the criteria for the city to be selected for study was that its population be constituted of a relatively homogeneous native white American stock. In 1920 native whites of native parentage made up nearly 85 per cent of the population, Negroes constituted only 6 per cent, and the foreign born constituted only 2 per cent of the Middletown community; and this picture had not changed substantially by 1930. Nevertheless, the Lynds devote a few passing comments to ethnic groups which indicate the following facts pertinent to class analysis: Negroes lived a completely separate group existence, nearly all of them earned low incomes, and Negro males were usually engaged in unskilled jobs. Ecologically, they were

<sup>30</sup> *Middletown*, p. 51.

situated in two sections of the city, one almost entirely Negro, and the other inhabited also by poor whites. Resentment of the Negro was keenest among working-class whites who feared their economic and residential competition. Business-class whites tolerated them "complacently" as a means of getting rough and dirty jobs done at low wages. Some gains were reported for Negroes during the decade 1925-35, particularly in the formation of Negro semicivic organizations such as Y.M.C.A. clubs and "Colored Elks" which ministered to the needs of the Negro group. However, the Lynds do not indicate that there was anything which approached a Negro middle class or business class in Middletown.

The Jewish population was small, had a growing group coherence, and was composed of small merchants. Jews were accepted in the smaller civic clubs, but not in Rotary. There was some social discrimination against them but generally of a mild nature. Further information on the role of the Jews in the class structure is not given. Some local prejudice against Catholics is reported, in part (as with the other minority groups) stirred up by the upward surge of the Ku Klux Klan in Middletown in the early twenties, but it was not of very great proportions. The role of Catholics in the class structure is not indicated.<sup>31</sup>

The Middletown studies, as pioneer research projects devoted to the description and analysis of the life of a total American community, make a valuable contribution to the understanding of "social class" phenomena in the United States. The use of occupation as the major defining criterion is relatively consistent throughout and appears to fit the rougher outlines of community structure in the Middletown of the twenties and thirties. The differential functioning of these broadly delineated groups in the institutional life of the community is described in considerable detail. With regard to other class variables, the attention paid to power relationships in community life which tend to perpetuate the exact outlines of the institutional system which produces the class divisions constitutes a major theoretical and empirical contribution.

<sup>31</sup> See *Middletown in Transition*, pp. 462-65 for the most concerted discussion of ethnic groups.



If one could have wished for more information at certain points, it must be kept in mind that class structure and functioning made up only one dimension of the Middletown studies, which also had the task of describing and analyzing institutional functioning and social change, in part within the framework of the entire Middletown "ethos." In particular, in their concern for outlining the broad power relationships in the community, the Lynds sacrifice an extensive portrayal of the life of the lower brackets of the business class—the "white collar" clerical workers and the small retailers and manufacturers. Moreover, some of the relationships between occupation and other variables of class analysis such as income, social status (apart from "corporate class consciousness"), and cultural attributes seem to be taken for granted and are documented in incidental fashion rather than spelled out with exact research rigor. And, finally, some of the disadvantages of the purely occupational approach to class, at least for the purpose of a detailed analysis of community structure, have become even more apparent with the passage of time and flow of events which postdate even the later of the Middletown studies. With the rise of organized labor to greater power in American life, it would not be safe in the mid-fifties to assume that a substantial portion of the organized higher levels of the working class has lower incomes than many of the lower business-class white-collar workers. In other words, in the Lynds' own framework, new power relationships in the middle or lower middle section of the power hierarchy loom on the horizon. The possible effect of these changing power relationships in the areas of occupation and income on group life, cultural attributes, and status identification add to the complexity of the problem of the relationship of variables which face the researcher in class. Against the foreground of these changes the Middletown studies stand as a sturdy baseline of measurement and implicit explanation.

## The Warner School

In the early thirties, W. Lloyd Warner, an American social anthropologist not long returned to the United States from a field study of a Stone Age people in Australia, inaugurated, under the sponsorship of the Committee of Industrial Physiology of Harvard University, an extensive research into the structure and social life of a small New England city. The resultant series of volumes on "Yankee City" were dominated by a "social class" framework, and "Warner," "Yankee City," and "class" have become terms of instantaneous association wherever students of social structure are gathered. Further research into the social structure of other American communities, including Midwestern "Jonesville," by Warner and his students and associates, and the resultant series of monographs and articles have led to the development of what may be called the Warner school of social class research. The major Warner researches are highly ambitious both in scope and in claim and have attracted considerable adverse critical attention as well as acceptance and endorsement. It will be part of our task in this chapter to evaluate many of these criticisms within the framework of our own analysis.

The ramifications of Warner's research efforts in the class structure of American communities have been extensive. Four volumes on the massive Yankee City study have already been published, and two more are promised. Warner directed this research,

participated in the field work, and is senior author of all the published volumes. Co-authors in this series are Paul S. Lunt, Leo Srole, and J. O. Low.<sup>1</sup> In the middle thirties, Warner directed a study of a small Southern city ("Old City") which had a triple focus: class structure within the white group, class structure within the Negro group, and white-Negro relations. This study appeared as *Deep South*, and was written by its chief field workers, Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner.<sup>2</sup> Warner was by this time on the faculty of the University of Chicago. Concurrently with these activities, Warner acted as co-director with Horace R. Cayton of a research project on the life of the Negro community in Chicago. This study, which contains a major section dealing with the class structure of Chicago's "Bronzeville," resulted in the publication of *Black Metropolis*, by Drake and Cayton.<sup>3</sup> A portion of this research was used also for a volume on the interrelationships of class and color as they affect Negro personality development. This book, *Color and Human Nature*, by Warner, Junker, and Adams, appeared as one of the American Youth Commission's series of studies on Negro youth. Another volume in this series, *Children of Bondage*, by Davis and Dollard, uses the Warner class framework and draws, in part, on materials from the "Deep South" research.<sup>4</sup>

During the forties Warner and a group of associates and students carried out, under the auspices of the University of Chicago's Committee on Human Development, a full-scale community

<sup>1</sup> W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), "Yankee City Series," Vol. I; W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Status System of a Modern Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), "Yankee City Series," Vol. II; W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), "Yankee City Series," Vol. III; W. Lloyd Warner and J. O. Low, *The Social System of a Modern Factory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), "Yankee City Series," Vol. IV. Vol. V, *American Symbol Systems*, by W. Lloyd Warner, and the concluding volume, *Data Book for the Yankee City Series*, by W. Lloyd Warner, have not yet appeared.

<sup>2</sup> Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941).

<sup>3</sup> St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1945).

<sup>4</sup> W. Lloyd Warner, Buford H. Junker, and Walter A. Adams, *Color and Human Nature* (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1941); Allison Davis and John Dollard, *Children of Bondage* (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1940).

study of a Midwestern town which was given the fictitious name of "Jonesville." The substantive findings were published in *Democracy in Jonesville*,<sup>5</sup> and a detailed description of the methods used in stratifying the population appeared as the monograph, *Social Class in America*.<sup>6</sup> The relation of social class to educational processes was explored in *Who Shall Be Educated?*<sup>7</sup> by Warner, Havighurst, and Loeb, which contains empirical materials from several of the community studies.

Davis and Havighurst have continued their Warner oriented researches in class with a study of child rearing practices as differentiated by class and color, using a sample of 202 Chicago families. This work has been reported on in article form by themselves and Ericson as well as in a volume, *Father of the Man*.<sup>8</sup> In addition to these monographs and research reports, a number of articles of largely theoretical nature stem directly from the Warner studies and approach.<sup>9</sup> A general discussion of American life, based

<sup>5</sup> W. Lloyd Warner and Associates, *Democracy in Jonesville* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949). Warner's collaborators in this volume were Wilfrid C. Bailey, Arch Cooper, Walter Eaton, A. B. Hollingshead, Carson McGuire, Marchia Meeker, Bernice Neugarten, Joseph Rosenstein, Evon Z. Vogt, Jr., and Donald Wray.

<sup>6</sup> W. Lloyd Warner, Marchia Meeker, and Kenneth Eells, *Social Class in America* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1949). Bernice L. Neugarten, who contributed to *Democracy in Jonesville*, also reports separately on her study of the effect of social class position on the friendship preferences of elementary and high school children in "Social Class and Friendship among School Children," *American Journal of Sociology*, LI (Jan., 1946), 305-13. Carson McGuire, another contributor, has published separately on mobility aspects of the Jonesville study in "Social Stratification and Mobility Patterns," *American Sociological Review*, XV (April, 1950), 195-204, and "Conforming, Mobile, and Divergent Families," *Marriage and Family Living*, XIV (May, 1952), 109-15. August B. Hollingshead's study, *Elmtown's Youth*, reports on the same community, but, since he developed his own stratification procedures, his work will be considered separately.

<sup>7</sup> W. Lloyd Warner, Robert J. Havighurst, and Martin B. Loeb, *Who Shall Be Educated?* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944).

<sup>8</sup> Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, "Social Class and Color Differences in Child Rearing," *American Sociological Review*, XI (Dec., 1946), 698-710; Martha C. Ericson, "Child-Rearing and Social Status," *American Journal of Sociology*, LII (Nov., 1946), 190-92; Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, *Father of the Man* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1947).

<sup>9</sup> The following is a selected list: by W. Lloyd Warner; "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII (Sept., 1936), 234-37; "The Society, the Individual and His Mental Disorders," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, XCIV (Sept., 1937), 275-84; "Social Anthropology and the Modern Community," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI (May, 1941), 785-96; "Formal Education and the Social Structure," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, IX (May, 1936), 524-31; by W. Lloyd Warner and Allison Davis; "A Comparative Study of American



on his research findings, has also been published by Warner.<sup>10</sup> In 1955 Warner and his associate, Abegglen, reported in two volumes on a research in the occupational mobility of American business leaders (see chap. i, n. 21). Since the research falls outside the scope of his community studies, it will not be considered in this analysis.

Although Warner's influence on American class research and orientation has been a powerful one,<sup>11</sup> his theoretical apparatus and research scheme have drawn considerable criticism.<sup>12</sup> Some of these criticisms are directed at "specifics" of his system and findings, others pertain to his sampling claim that his studies of small cities and towns<sup>13</sup> are generalizable to all of American society. "Jonesville has been our laboratory for studying Americans," he asserts. "Jonesville is in all Americans and all Amer-

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Caste," in *Race Relations and the Race Problem*, ed. Edgar T. Thompson (Durham: Duke University Press, 1939), 219-45; by Allison Davis; "American Status Systems and the Socialization of the Child," *American Sociological Review*, VI (June, 1941), 345-54; "Socialization and Adolescent Personality," *Adolescence Forty-third Yearbook, Part I* (Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1944), chap. xi, reprinted in *Readings in Social Psychology*, ed. Theodore M. Newcomb and Eugene L. Hartley (New York: Holt, 1947), pp. 139-150; "Caste, Economy, and Violence," *American Journal of Sociology*, LI (July, 1945), 7-15; Elaine Ogden McNeil and Horace R. Cayton, "Research on the Urban Negro," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVII (Sept., 1941), 176-83.

<sup>10</sup> W. Lloyd Warner, *American Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

<sup>11</sup> John Dollard, in *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, admits a considerable debt to Warner for his formulation of stratification concepts. Warner, however, had no direct connection with the research in this community, and the Dollard volume will be considered in a later chapter.

<sup>12</sup> See particularly, C. Wright Mills, review of *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, in *American Sociological Review*, VII (April, 1942), 263-71; Harold W. Pfautz and Otis Dudley Duncan, "A Critical Evaluation of Warner's Work in Community Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, XV (April, 1950), 205-15; Seymour M. Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, "Social Status and Social Structure: A Re-examination of Data and Interpretations: I," *British Journal of Sociology*, II (June, 1951), 150-68, and "Social Status and Social Structure: A Re-examination of Data and Interpretations: II," *British Journal of Sociology*, II (Sept., 1951), 230-54; Florence Rockwood Kluckhohn, "Dominant and Substitute Profiles of Cultural Orientations: Their Significance for the Analysis of Social Stratification," *Social Forces*, XXVIII (May, 1950), 376-93; Ely Chinoy, "Research in Class Structure," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, XVI (May, 1950), 255-63. For a nonevaluative summary of criticisms of the Warner approach, see Ruth Rosner Kornhauser, "The Warner Approach to Social Stratification," in *Class, Status and Power*, ed. R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset, pp. 224-55.

<sup>13</sup> At the time of the respective researches, the population of Yankee City was about 17,000, of Jonesville, 6,000 and of Old City (the Deep South research), 10,000.

icans are in Jonesville, for he that dwelleth in America dwelleth in Jonesville, and Jonesville in him. . . . To study Jonesville is to study America."<sup>14</sup> It has been duly noted that such a claim may well stem from the research techniques and assumptions characteristic of the discipline of cultural anthropology which constitutes Warner's professional training and orientation. The ethnologist dealing with relatively self-contained small tribal communities, each one of which constitutes its own effective cultural "universe," faces no problem of generalizing his results, granted that he has correctly described his community. Urban, industrialized societies containing thousands of communities of varying size and complexity ranging from small village hamlets to metropolises containing millions of residents obviously pose very real problems of a sampling nature for research carried out only in one, or one type of, community. This point assumes added relevance when there is already in existence a body of theoretical and empirical literature which suggests the differential nature of social relationships and processes in communities of varying size in Western society.

In view of these considerations, Warner's claim for the national applicability of his results is scientifically unsound. That is to say, it is unproved. On the other hand, the categorical counterclaim that the basic outlines of a status system similar to that which Warner has found in his small communities are *not* present in the large cities and metropolises of America is also unsupported by sufficient empirical evidence and may be premature. While Warner's conceptual scheme and techniques for class (status group) placement are peculiarly suited to small communities, it is not impossible that certain modifications of his concepts and techniques might lead to the discernment of a status system in large cities which would bear some resemblance to that of Jonesville or Yankee City. This is a point we shall return to later.

*Definition: Stratification variables.* Warner defines a class essentially as a *status group* whose status ranking is determined by the evaluations of members of the community: "By class is meant two or more orders of people who are believed to be, and are accordingly ranked by the members of the community, in socially

<sup>14</sup> *Democracy in Jonesville*, xv.

superior and inferior positions."<sup>15</sup> Closely associated with the status definition in his concept of class are two other factors or requirements. These are *participation* and *acceptance*. In order to be a member of a status group or class, a person must participate in the social interaction characteristic of the class, particularly in its cliques and associations, and must be accepted as a peer by its members: "To belong to a particular level in the social-class system of America means that a family or individual has gained acceptance as an equal by those who belong in the class. The behavior in this class and the participation of those in it must be rated by the rest of the community as being at a particular place in the social scale."<sup>16</sup> Thus the primary ascertainment technique (to be discussed below) which he developed in the Jonesville study is called "Evaluated *Participation*" (our italics).

With this type of conceptual scheme the Warner group declares that it found six classes in Yankee City and Old City, which were given the following names: upper-upper (UU), lower-upper (LU), upper-middle (UM), lower-middle (LM), upper-lower (UL), and lower-lower (LL). In Jonesville, the two upper classes are grouped together as one class since the "old family"—"new wealth" distinction on the basis of which the division was discerned in the East had not had time to develop hierarchically in this newer, Midwestern community. Warner also introduces another, three-fold division by referring frequently to (a) the Level Above the Common Man (the upper classes and the upper-middle class), (b) the Common Man Level (the lower-middle and upper-lower classes), and (c) the Level Below the Common Man (the lower-lower class).

An important question which must be raised at this point is whether the classes or status groups in the Warner system are meant to be thought of as real entities having a separate and identifiable existence or simply as convenient and arbitrary categories which divide an unbroken continuum. Gross has called these two usages of the class concept respectively "substantive" and "classificatory."<sup>17</sup> It seems clear that Warner regards his classes

<sup>15</sup> *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> *Social Class in America*, p. 23.

<sup>17</sup> Llewellyn Gross, "The Use of Class Concepts in Sociological Research," *American Journal of Sociology*, LIV (March, 1949), 409-21. We do not agree with all



as real entities, or "substantive" in nature. However, he does speak of classes as "blending into" one another. Both claims are found in the statement that his research methods "demonstrated that, while the classes in the status system of Jonesville blended into each other, they nevertheless had an existence and place of their own."<sup>18</sup> In the Jonesville research he subdivides each class into three "grades" ("strong or high," "solid," and "weak"), which seems to indicate both internal status divisions and degrees of adherence to or inclusion in the class. What Warner appears to be saying, although it is never stated clearly and incisively, is that he regards the five or six social classes as real social psychological "constructs" in the minds of community residents, that a "core" of people occupies each of these class positions solidly, and that there are others who function on either side of these cores whose status group identity is more ambiguous. Some in this latter category, it appears, are in the process of moving from one class to another.

While in Warner's definitional system the status groups of the community are perceived and identified by the residents of the community themselves, it is apparent from an inspection of his data that all of the residents do not perceive the status structure in the same way. Particularly salient is the fact that the finer distinctions are made in the status area closest to the particular respondent. For instance, in the Deep South research, the authors report that the upper classes make no distinction between the upper-lower and the lower-lower classes, while the lower classes lump the upper-upper, the lower-upper, and the upper-middle groups into a general upper category. Warner states in his Yankee City report: "It must not be thought that all the people in Yankee City are aware of all the minute distinctions made in this book."<sup>19</sup> Thus, in the last analysis, as Chinoy has pointed out in his comment on Warner's work, "it would seem . . . that the status order in the community as it is described is actually a composite version of the prestige hierarchy which is built from

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the implications which Gross draws out of this division. See Milton M. Gordon, "Social Class in American Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology*, LV (Nov., 1949), 265, n. 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Social Class in America*, p. 222.

<sup>19</sup> *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, p. 91.



the varied perspectives of the local residents. It is basically a construction of the researcher rather than the consensus of the community."<sup>20</sup>

Warner does not address himself to this problem clearly and concisely either in his definitional statements or in the description of his ascertainment process. It is, in our opinion, not an insoluble problem if dealt with clearly. If one defines the status groups of a community in terms which allow for more precise distinctions to be made by residents at their own status levels, and sets up clearly delineated criteria for including varying perspectives and excluding actual conflicting judgments (and evaluating the import of the nature and magnitude of such conflicts for the system itself)<sup>21</sup> one may fashion a consistent definition and operational procedure of status group analysis based on the evaluations of community residents. In other words, at least part of Warner's difficulty on this point is that he has not "faced" the problem; i.e., he has not articulated it and devised a conceptual scheme which embraces and deals with it.

Mills, on the basis of the Yankee City research has charged that Warner's concept of class is not unidimensional—that it "swallows up" economic position and power, along with status, and is therefore used as a "sponge word."<sup>22</sup> On this point we disagree. While Warner does not systematically distinguish among these variables, it is clear that he conceives of an economic order as distinct from the status order. In fact, he states that he entered upon the Yankee City study with the hypothesis that economic position alone determined the "fundamental structure" of the community but rejected it when interviews revealed that the rankings made by the residents of the city did not rest entirely on economic factors. Subsequently, economic indices are cross tabulated with status position, which indicates a conceptual distinction between these two orders of data. While the "fuzziness" in his description of the ascertainment process tends to becloud the issue somewhat, it is apparent in his definitional statements, as we have indicated above, that his "classes" are considered to be status

<sup>20</sup> Chinoy, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

<sup>21</sup> This point will be discussed below.

<sup>22</sup> Mills, *op. cit.*, 264-66.

groups. This becomes clear without question in the Jonesville study with his formulation of the "Evaluated Participation" technique.

One of the most frequent charges made against Warner's researches is that they neglect and underemphasize the role of economic (including occupational) forces in stratification phenomena. Apparently stung by some of these criticisms, Warner has made a number of defensive statements, particularly in his methodological handbook, *Social Class in America*, which assert that he *does* appreciate the importance of economic factors in stratification, but that by themselves they are not sufficient to predict and explain social class position. For instance, he declares:

Economic factors are significant and important in determining the class position of any family or person, influencing the kind of behavior we find in any class, and contributing their share to the present form of our status system. But, while significant and necessary, the economic factors are not sufficient to predict where a particular family or individual will be or to explain completely the phenomena of social class. Something more than a large income is necessary for high social position. Money must be translated into socially approved behavior and possessions, and they in turn must be translated into intimate participation with, and acceptance by, members of a superior class.<sup>23</sup>

Many of the arguments and counterarguments on this issue are made rather broadly as though committed philosophical positions, Marxist-oriented and anti-Marxist, are at stake. Any resolution of the question must ignore generalities and rest on a careful analysis of what Warner has and has not done specifically in his analysis of the role of economic factors.

In the first place, beyond mere description of the occupational bases of the communities which he has studied, Warner has provided some *structural* analysis of the relationships between status group placement and economic and occupational factors. That is, he has shown relationships at a given point in time between status group position and income, occupation, and certain other economic variables.<sup>24</sup> In the Yankee City study these relationships

<sup>23</sup> *Social Class in America*, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Certain details in Warner's presentation here have invited legitimate criti-

are provided in cross tabulations,<sup>25</sup> and in the Jonesville study (in *Social Class in America*) by means of correlation coefficients.<sup>26</sup> The correlations are positive and high but not perfect.

Secondly, with regard to the *dynamic* relationships, that is, causal interplay of economic and status positions, Warner, as indicated above, has stated in a general fashion that he regards economic factors as important in producing status position but not as sufficient in themselves, since they must be translated into appropriate social behavior and participation before a particular status position is crystallized. However, little systematic attention is devoted to the actual causal operation of the economic factors in the life of the community. Most of the emphasis in the volumes is on the conversion techniques by which status position is consolidated. Thus, more as a matter of omission in terms of the focus of the research design on status conversion techniques rather than as a deliberate disavowal of the importance of economic forces, the dynamic role of these economic forces receives minimal attention.

Probably the most judicious criticism of Warner's treatment of economic factors has been made by Merton, who points out that the Yankee City research fails to take into account the dynamic interplay of economic and status positions over a number of generations, that is, in the historical dimension. He writes:

By stressing esteem or prestige gradients as the gist of the class structure, they [Warner and Lunt] seem to have over-reacted to their original "general economic interpretation." If they intend only to assert that *contemporary* income, wealth and occupation are insufficient to assign all members of the community to their "correct" positions within the prestige-hierarchy, their evidence is adequate. But this is a perilously narrow conception of an "economic" interpretation. Unfortunately, the volume does not include case studies of families who, *over a period of generations*, have not had their claims to upper-upper status validated by "economic" criteria which must serve as means for maintaining the behavioral attributes of that status. The occurrence

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cism. For instance, as Mills points out, his data for Yankee City on class and property holdings are confined to domestic real estate and the "none" category is omitted. But that is not the main point here.

<sup>25</sup> *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, chaps. xiii-xv.

<sup>26</sup> *Social Class in America*, chap. x.

of lags in the imputation of status after changes in the objective determinants of status is to be expected. We may hazard the guess that, had historical dimensions been taken into account, the initial dilemma of a "general economic interpretation" or a cultural interpretation would have been perceived as a pseudo-problem.<sup>27</sup>

This criticism is well merited. It seems clear that in his research operation and reports, Warner has underemphasized the role of economic forces operating through time to produce status claims and the formation of status groups. On the other hand he has by no means denied the causal importance of economic factors or ignored their structural relationship to status position. Moreover, many of his critics fail to give him credit for turning a pioneer research focus on the contemporary structure of status groups and the dynamic effect of the status factor on the economic position or life chances of persons currently on the scene. After all, status factors, once they are in operation, affect the economic forces themselves as a continuing process of interaction is set up.

Warner has been charged also with being unconcerned in his research with the third major stratification variable—political or community power. While he does not conceptualize this variable, a careful examination of his work will show that many aspects of the operation of community power controls appear in the studies and are related to position in the status structure. In the Yankee City study, Warner describes the relationship between municipal office holding and class, both generally and in terms of the degree of power attached to the office. It is shown that the upper and upper-middle classes are considerably overrepresented in the "high-control" offices in terms of their proportions in the general population.<sup>28</sup> Other patterns of community control are also indicated. Warner states categorically that his interview data show that higher class position serves to protect both adults and juveniles from police action in crime and delinquency behavior. Control of community-wide associations by the upper classes is pictured in the "Profiles," or composite case histories. At the annual election meeting of the "Patriotic Order of the United States

<sup>27</sup> Robert K. Merton, review of *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, in *Survey Graphic*, XXXI (Oct., 1942), 438.

<sup>28</sup> *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, chap. xviii.



Veterans of All Wars," members of the two highest classes concertedly put in a rare appearance and by their influence swing the election for president to their own candidate. In another Profile, the decisive influence of upper-upper class Mr. Breckenridge (activated in the form of almost casual answers to questions directed at him by acquaintances) is pictured in five different areas: (a) whether a new school building should be built—negative; (b) whether a new real-estate project should be supported—negative; (c) whether some business men should invest in certain new utilities offerings—negative; (d) whether a local bank should make a loan to a young ethnic who wishes to buy a house—positive; (e) whether he thought highly of the new minister of his church—negative. In another reported actual incident of upper-class domination in a crucial area, upper-class residents secured a court injunction against a nearby factory to prevent it from operating at night, complaining of the noise. The company shut down the plant, throwing 120 men out of work. This occurred during the depression and aroused considerable protest and resentment on the part of many members of the community.

In one important happening, however, class controls in Yankee City operated differently from the way they did in Middletown. The strike for unionization and higher wages of the shoe workers in Yankee City during the depression was a successful one and appeared to meet with little community resistance. The union organizers were able to secure the use of the City Hall for a mass meeting of workers; the mayor refused to be pressured by the factory owners into taking their side; the local newspaper did not take a hostile attitude toward the strikers, remaining more or less "on the fence"; and the strikers had friendly relations with the police on the picket line. This community support of the strikers rather than management is explained by Warner as the result of two factors (in contrast to former days): the factories were largely dominated by absentee owners who had no part in the general life of the community, and these owners were of ethnic background—Jewish—and thus vulnerable to in-group loyalties based on the "Yankee" tradition of the city.

In the Jonesville research, power controls are shown operating in the life of the community, principally in three areas: educa-

tion, economic life, and political activity. The most thoroughly articulated treatment is devoted to the domination of the educational system by the upper and upper-middle classes.<sup>29</sup> The picture presented is a cumulative one which operates in the following way: by electing their own representatives to the Board of Education and controlling its policies, the upper classes maintain a low tax rate which is favorable for them but inadequate for the capital equipment and operating expenses of the Jonesville schools. This process had proceeded to such a point that in 1941 the regional accrediting association removed the Jonesville High School from its approved list and the state university threatened similar action if the Board's policies were not changed. Moreover, pressure is exerted on both administrators and teachers to conform to conservative political and social doctrines and to favor children of the higher classes in matters of discipline, extracurricular activities, honors, and even grading. Social discrimination is practiced by the higher-class children themselves, and the cultural background of the lower-class children predisposes them to behavior which is negatively evaluated in the middle-class milieu of the school. The combination of all these pressures and forces produces considerable unhappiness for lower-class children in the public schools, and a high drop-out rate in high school. Thus the class power structure, through its pervasive influence on the educational system, tends to negate equal opportunity and discourage social mobility in this most strategic of areas. This is the picture presented of the Jonesville school system in the early forties.

In the political realm, attention is devoted to the operation of the two major parties in the life of the community. The Republican party dominates Jonesville's political life and draws major support from all classes in the town. Social and economic pressures to vote Republican are described as operating in all parts of the class system. While many of the minor functionaries are from the upper-lower class, important and controlling positions in

<sup>29</sup> The principal chapter on the educational system in *Democracy in Jonesville* (chap. xii) was written by A. B. Hollingshead, who later published his own volume, *Elmtown's Youth*, dealing with the general impact of the class system on adolescents in the community. Warner's chap. vi and Bernice Neugarten's chap. v also contribute to the theme.

the party structure are shown to be filled by persons of upper-middle or upper class background, who possess both the social skills and the economic connections considered necessary for the successful performance of their role.

In a chapter devoted to the operation of Jonesville's largest industry, "The Mill," which is owned by outside interests, the civic power of the manager is attested to:

The economic and social force of The Mill affects every part of the life of the community. Everyone recognizes its power. Politicians, hat in hand, wait upon Mr. Waddell, manager of The Mill, to find out what he thinks. Civic leaders seek out the manager of The Mill for the answers to such important questions as "Shall the tax rate be increased to improve the education our young people are getting?"—"Shall the new minister be Mr. Jones or Mr. Smith?"—"Should the city support various civic and moral enterprises?"—"Should new industries enter the town and possibly compete with The Mill for the town's available labor supply?" They want to know what Mr. Waddell thinks. Mr. Waddell usually lets them know.<sup>30</sup>

With regard to the last question, Mr. Waddell's answer has apparently been "No," for it is pointed out later that The Mill management has used its influence to prevent new industries from coming to Jonesville and thus providing additional competition for labor.

In view of this evidence from both the Yankee City and Jonesville studies, it seems justifiable to conclude that Warner and his associates, while they have not made the community power structure the central focus of their researches, have not neglected this aspect of stratification analysis nor failed to suggest many of its relationships to the status order.

*Associated Variables.* One of the significant theoretical accomplishments of the Warner research is its focus on the problem of "group life," or communality, and class. The thesis presented, with varying degrees of articulateness, is that the various status levels of a community to a considerable extent define the social systems within which the respective members carry on most of their intimate social contacts, tending to limit these systems to the person's own or adjacent class levels. This tendency toward com-

<sup>30</sup> *Democracy in Jonesville*, p. 101.

munality is evidenced indirectly in ecological separation, and may be examined more directly by consideration of such "social structures" as the clique, voluntary associations (including the church), and the family.

Partial, rather than complete, ecological separation by class is demonstrated quantitatively for both Yankee City and Jonesville. There is a tendency for each ecological area to have a characteristic spread through two or three class levels only. Significant quantitative data on the class makeup of cliques is presented only for Yankee City. Here Warner presents data on over 22,000 clique memberships (how many cliques and whether a sample or the total population is not indicated). Cliques were classified as to how many classes were represented in them. From the data<sup>81</sup> it appears that the percentages of class members who belong to cliques which go no further above or below their own class than one level (including those who belong to cliques limited to their own class) are as follows: upper-upper, 76 per cent; lower-upper, 86 per cent; upper middle, 61 per cent; lower-middle, 70 per cent; upper-lower, 78 per cent; and lower-lower, 56 per cent—in other words, approximately two-thirds or more of nearly every class. The tendency to belong to cliques which have members from one's own class *only* is considerably smaller, ranging downward from 37 per cent in the upper-upper class to 14 per cent in the lower-middle. Emphasis is placed on the social clique which engages in reciprocal home hospitality as being especially significant for class analysis and placement.

Voluntary associations are reported by Warner to have a wider class spread than cliques, frequently including three and four classes, and occasionally the entire range of classes in the community. Nevertheless, some are narrow in range and nearly all, according to his data, are class typed. That is, either because of restricted membership, or concentration of membership in one class, or because one class monopolizes the leadership of the organization, it becomes associated in the minds of members of the community with a particular segment of the status hierarchy. Thus, in Jonesville the "Monday Club," a women's social club, has members only from the upper class and upper-middle and is

<sup>81</sup> *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, p. 354.



identified in the town as an upper class club. Eighty-one per cent of the membership of Rotary is upper-middle, whereas 92 per cent of the membership of Eastern Star, a women's auxiliary, is lower-middle.<sup>32</sup> In general, the upper and upper-middle classes belong to organizations emphasizing social and artistic functions, charitable works, and service in the community, whereas the three classes lower in the scale tend to hold memberships in lodges, auxiliaries, and patriotic societies of a non-"lineage" character. However, there is some overlap even with this broad dichotomy, particularly between the upper-middle and lower-middle classes. Both incidence and frequency of membership in associations vary directly with class level. As for churches, while some of the larger ones have a wide membership spread, they are also class typed because of concentration of members and leadership patterns.

All members of a family unit living in the same house usually have the same class standing, according to Warner. The crucial point in family analysis with regard to communality is the degree of class endogamy. Warner declares that such endogamy is the general tendency, though inter-class marriage is not excluded, and in the Yankee City report cites several examples of successful attempts by upper-upper and lower-upper class families to prevent marriages by their members into the middle class. Regrettably, however, in neither the Yankee City nor the Jonesville studies are there any firm quantitative data on class endogamy.

In summary, while Warner has marshaled considerable evidence which demonstrates undeniably that considerations of status are significantly related to the social interaction which constitutes "group life," or communality, he has not been able to show that there are sharp cut-off points at the boundaries of each of his alleged status levels. This in no way means that the association of status level with communality is an unimportant problem or that such association as has been demonstrated in the Warner researches is not of large import. But it does logically demand (a) that Warner face the implications of the considerable overlap for his theory of social class structure and (b) that the topic be researched further and in sharper detail, particularly at the social

<sup>32</sup> See *Social Class in America*, p. 95, and *Democracy in Jonesville*, chap. ix.

clique and intermarriage level where the issues of communality are decisive.

Our second associated variable is that of cultural behavior, or style of life. Throughout the Warner researches it is claimed that status level is highly correlated with cultural systems of behavior, and an impressive amount of evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, is presented to document this thesis. Some of the differences, such as those involving living conditions and consumption patterns, obviously follow from differences in income and occupation. Others, such as patterns of associational participation, desire for education, and recreational patterns, lie more in the intangible realm of motivation and the socialization process. No attempt will be made here to itemize these differences,<sup>33</sup> but several of the larger issues of the findings will be examined.

The fact that material differences in style of life flow from differences in income associated with various status levels is, of course, hardly startling, though none the less worth documenting. However, the larger implications of the Warner findings concern the differences in psychological motivation and intangible behavior patterns which, it is alleged, are internalized in the individual as a result of his being socialized in a particular portion of the status hierarchy. The outlines of this differential socialization process are effectively stated by Davis and Havighurst in the following passage:

To students of learning, and especially to those who wish to study the processes of socialization, a detailed understanding of American social-class cultures and motivational patterns is now a *sine qua non* of both research and therapy. For the social class of the child's family determines not only the neighborhood in which he lives and the play groups he will have, but also the basic cultural acts and goals toward which he will be trained. The social-class system maintains cultural, economic, and social barriers which prevent intimate social intermixture between the slums, the Gold Coast and the middle-class. We know that human beings can learn their culture only *from other human beings*, who already know and exhibit that culture. Therefore, by setting up barriers to social participation, the American social class system actually prevents the vast majority of children of

<sup>33</sup> A good summary will be found in Ruth Rosner Kornhauser, *op. cit.*

the working classes, or the slums, from learning any culture but that of their own groups. *Thus the pivotal meaning of social class* to students of human development is that it defines and systematizes different learning environments for children of different classes.<sup>34</sup>

It should be apparent that such differences, to the degree present, will constitute additional and perhaps even more fundamental handicaps to the lower-status person in his move through life than those of a material nature. For example, the lower-class child who is not motivated to finish high school or go on to college by his home and neighborhood environment and who develops speech and behavior patterns which mark him as lower class has been effectively and perhaps permanently disadvantaged by his lower-class learning environment. The demonstration of this pattern must be regarded as one of the signal accomplishments of the Warner researches.

However, from a methodological point of view, it must be pointed out that the differences in cultural patterns, material and nonmaterial, even where most rigorously demonstrated, are not perfectly correlated with Warner's status levels, and that there is considerable overlapping between adjacent classes. This fact raises again the question of the distinctiveness of the postulated status levels.

*Ascertainment.* It is in the ascertainment process, the combination of techniques for delineating the status levels and assigning people to them, that the most serious deficiencies of the Warner school may be found. In terms of the class system which Warner claims to have discovered in the communities studied, this process should accomplish four objectives. It should (a) demonstrate the existence of a general status hierarchy, (b) show that this hierarchy is divided into substantive status levels demarcated from each other, (c) present evidence of substantial agreement by community residents on the nature and number of these status levels, and (d) prove that community residents are in general agreement on what families and persons belong on each level. Let us examine how effectively these objectives were attained.

<sup>34</sup> Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, "Social Class and Color Differences in Child-Rearing," p. 699.

The essence of the Warner ascertainment technique is the transformation by "status analysts," i.e., the researchers, of ratings and status remarks made by community informants about their fellow residents and the organizations in which they participate into a consistent picture of the status structure of the community and the people at each status level. The technique is said to rest squarely on the judgments made by the community residents, the task of the analysts being simply to record, systematize, and collate these judgments. In the Yankee City study we are given no precise, quantitative information on how this process was carried out, but by the time of the Jonesville research Warner had worked out a codification of his procedure and had developed, in addition, a second instrument, an index which correlated highly with the basic status placement technique. These two techniques were called, respectively, Evaluated Participation (E.P.) and the Index of Status Characteristics (I.S.C.) and are presented in detail in the manual *Social Class in America*. They will be dealt with serially.

### **Evaluated Participation**

Evaluated Participation consists of a series of rating techniques made by community informants and collated by the researcher which, in Warner's words, are "posed on the propositions that those who interact in the social system of a community evaluate the participation of those around them, that the place where an individual participates is evaluated, and that the members of the community are explicitly or implicitly aware of the ranking and translate their evaluations of such social participation into social-class ratings that can be communicated to the investigator."<sup>35</sup> The several techniques are identified as follows:

1. Rating by Matched Agreements. This appears to contain two subtechniques: (a) Informants provide the Social-Class Configuration of the community—that is, they name the status groups and their rank order, which are then examined for agreement or disagreement by the analyst; (b) informants then identify certain

<sup>35</sup> *Social Class in America*, p. 35.



persons as belonging to each of these status levels. The analyst matches the identifications and counts the pairs of agreements and disagreements among the informants on the class placement of each of the rated individuals.

2. Rating by Symbolic Placement. Informants make symbolic remarks about other persons which have status connotations. These remarks refer to "structures" (e.g., "the 400"), ecological areas (e.g., "the wrong side of town," "Main Line"), and social traits (e.g., "high hats"). These are used for rating by the analyst.

3. Rating by Status Reputation. Informants make remarks with status connotations about traits possessed or believed to be possessed by other persons (e.g., "leader," "substantial citizen," "dirty and immoral").

4. Rating by Comparison. Informants assert that a person is equal in status, or superior, or inferior, to others whose social class has already been established.

5. Rating by Simple Assignment. Informants specifically assign a person to a particular class without delineating the entire social class configuration.

6. Rating by Institutional Membership. Informants declare that a person belongs to a particular "institution" such as a clique, association, church, or family, whose status position has been previously determined.

These data are collated by the analyst, who is then, it is alleged, in a position to determine how many classes there are in the community and which persons belong to each class.

If these techniques are factored and further codified, it is apparent that there are three basic steps: (a) Informants "rate" or give judgments on the number and nature of the status levels in the community; (b) they assign persons to each of these status levels either directly or by comparison; and (c) they "rate" or make status remarks about symbols, traits, and "institutions" with which the person is connected. All of these processes require a firmly articulated and communicable body of instructions which specify (a) the composition, i.e., number and representativeness of the sample of raters (and a justification of the sample chosen in terms of the social class theory on which the research is based);

(b) the composition of the sample of community members rated, with particular reference to the question of whether it is representative and inclusive of doubtful as well as clear cases; (c) the amount of agreement necessary on judgments about the number and ranking of classes (the status configuration), and ratings of particular persons, before one accepts the proposition that there are a specified number of classes in the community and that a person belongs to a designated class; and (d) a quantitative technique for translating amorphous status remarks about symbols, traits, and "institutions" into ratings which allow equating these remarks with membership or participation in the designated status levels.

Warner provides virtually none of these specifications either generally or in remarks about how the Jonesville population was stratified. What he gives turns out to be a series of *illustrations* of the use of the techniques and a sprinkling of fugitive remarks which do not in sum fulfill the criteria noted above.

We are never told exactly how many community raters were used to stratify Jonesville's population or exactly how they were selected. We are vaguely advised in using the E.P. technique to acquire "a number [*sic*] of good [*sic*] informants with diversified social backgrounds."<sup>36</sup> What is "a number" and what are "good" informants? Are they those who view the class system as does the investigator or who are particularly sensitive to status considerations? We are given for illustrative purposes the social class configurations of six informants, and the number and percentage of matched agreements on individuals of ten informants, and are told that they were chosen simply because they were "good [*sic*] examples." The percentage of matched agreements for the ten informants is, in fact, high (95 per cent), but the status configurations of the six informants, according to our analysis of the informants' verbatim remarks, show considerable disagreement, two informants identifying five classes, two identifying four classes, one identifying three classes, and one identifying six, and the two informant groups overlap! Furthermore, as has been pointed out by Lipset and Bendix, the raters are heavily weighted towards the upper-middle class portion of the scale. Only one is a laborer, and

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

he sees only three classes and identifies them in terms of income and power rather than social status.<sup>37</sup>

With regard to the community sample of persons to be rated we are informed only that "several hundred names" should be placed by E.P., following which the I.S.C. can be substituted for the remaining members of the population, presumably after validation on the E.P. group. But a highly significant direction is given: "Any doubtful names about which evidence is insufficient should be thrown out; only those whose class position is securely established should be used."<sup>38</sup> Warner does not seem to recognize the implication of this step. In effect it confines his study to those members of the community who have a well-recognized status position, thus begging the question of how many, in fact, do. It raises a similar question with regard to the validity of the I.S.C., which we shall consider later. We are never told how many families in all were rated by the E.P. method, but the study group on which the I.S.C. was validated consisted of 339 families, or one-sixth of Jonesville's families. Furthermore, as Pfautz and Duncan have pointed out, comparative inspection of both Warner's data and census material suggests that the E.P. sample is not proportionately distributed throughout the Jonesville class structure but is overrepresented at the upper portion of the scale.<sup>39</sup>

Our third point concerns criteria of confidence for agreement in raters' judgments about the number of status levels and the persons assigned to each level. Warner gives none. Frequently he assures us categorically that such agreement will be high; at other times he raises the question by implication but provides no answer. We have discovered only one remark on the subject which contains any hint of procedure. It is quoted in full:

Questions sometimes arise about disagreement among the informants on an individual's social place. Should this happen, two lines of procedure are possible. Either the card [on which the various ratings for an individual are recorded] should be placed in a doubtful and "class unassigned" category because the information is unreliable or

<sup>37</sup> Lipset and Bendix, "Social Status and Social Structure: A Re-examination of Data and Interpretations: I," pp. 160-66.

<sup>38</sup> *Social Class in America*, p. 112.

<sup>39</sup> Pfautz and Duncan, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

because two equally reliable and well-informed people disagree about a person's position; or when, after re-examining the evidence for the reliability of the informants, it is discovered that one of them is highly reliable and thoroughly conversant with the place of the person being studied and the other is less reliable and less well-informed, or if the meaning of one of the conflicting references is not certain and the other one is clear and reliable, the uncertain evidence should be disregarded and the card kept.<sup>40</sup>

In the first place, this begs the question. How much disagreement? If nine out of ten informants agree, is it necessary to be concerned? Secondly, the first procedure suggested raises again the question of the size of the "doubtful" category in the community, and thirdly, no criteria are provided for judging which of the informants is "less reliable and less well-informed." Thus, for the Jonesville sample of community residents rated by the E.P. method, apart from the illustrative data previously reviewed, we do not know what criteria of confidence, if any, were used in the ratings nor what percentage of residents in the original sample was discarded because of lack of agreement.

Our fourth request for specification dealt with a technique for transposing status remarks by informants about symbols, traits, and "institutions" into social class ratings. For "institutions" (family, clique, association, church) Warner appears to depend on a seven-point rating scale, apparently scored by the researcher. It is not clear how the seven-point scale is equated with the five-level class system. Reliance is also placed on examination of the concentration and degree of status dispersion of members of these groups whose class position has previously been determined. The evaluation of symbolic and status reputational remarks is handled qualitatively and illustratively and no firm technique for translating them into the five-class levels is apparent. There is no doubt that status evaluations are implicit in all these items. The only point at issue is a reliable and communicable technique for using them in the Warner scheme.

In view of the above considerations one must conclude that Warner has not provided in Evaluated Participation a clear-cut,

<sup>40</sup> *Social Class in America*, pp. 113-14.



reliable, and communicable set of techniques for discovering the status structure of a small community and the place of residents in it. He is on the right track. None of the elements in his procedure is without relevance for status analysis. But the logical problems in each research operation must be faced, and the tools sharpened so that they become clearly discernible and assessable by standard scientific criteria. Only then will he be on firm scientific ground.

Nevertheless, even if one does not accept Warner's picture in detail, it is impossible to doubt that he and his associates have provided valuable data on the operation of status mechanisms in small American communities. And it should be kept in mind that Hollingshead, carrying out his own research in the same community and using a simpler, more precise, and quantifiably more valid rating technique, has described the status structure of "Jonesville" in substantially the same terms as Warner. One hundred and thirty-four families were rated by both the E.P. and the Hollingshead methods; thus a test of mutual validity was provided. The percentage of agreement was high, ranging from 72 per cent in the upper-lower class (Hollingshead's Class IV) to 100 per cent in the upper-class (Hollingshead's Class I).<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, investigators such as Kaufman, Lenski, Duncan and Artis, Stone and Form, Wheeler, and Kenkel, working in other communities, have reported either a different number of prestige classes or findings which variously question the view that the status order contains discrete groupings or is even always hierarchical in nature.<sup>42</sup> It is possible, of course, that all of these variations are a function of the particular community studied. The question, for the moment, must be left open.

### The Index of Status Characteristics

The Index of Status Characteristics represents an attempt by the Warner group to develop an instrument for measuring status

<sup>41</sup> See August B. Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949), p. 41.

<sup>42</sup> These studies will be considered or cited in subsequent chapters.

group placement which is less costly and time consuming than the E.P. technique with its requirement of extensive and intensive interviewing. It must be clearly understood that the index is not an independently derived measure of social status and, in a strictly logical sense, it is not an alternative to E.P. as a method of measuring community status. It is simply a combination of factors which, with certain weights, was found in the Jonesville research to correlate highly with E.P. determined statuses. Therefore, granted this validation on the E.P. group, it can be used, with appropriate probability estimates, to measure the status placement of persons in any other group which is similar to the Jonesville group of families originally rated by E.P.<sup>43</sup>

In brief, the index was constructed in the following manner. By inspection of characteristics associated with particular statuses in the community, it was hypothesized that six factors, relatively easy to obtain, were correlated highly with status placement. These were occupation, amount of income, source of income (i.e., whether inherited wealth, profits, salary, wages, relief, etc.), house type, dwelling area, and education. Again, by simple inspection, a seven-point scale was constructed for each of these factors, one representing the highest (presumed highest status) score and seven the lowest score. The next step was to see how these factors actually correlated with status group placement. The validation group consisted of 339 Jonesville families for whom the E.P. ratings were available and who could be scored on each of the six rating scales. Actually, the basic validation was performed on the 209 families in this group who were "Old American," and separate analyses were carried out for ethnics. Multiple correlations were computed between varying combinations of the six factors and E.P. placement. It was found that the combination of all six factors correlated most highly with E. P. (.974) but that four characteristics, education and amount of income excluded, correlated almost as highly (.972). For purposes of simplicity and ease, the two factors were dropped. Optimum weights for the remaining four factors were obtained by use of the regression equation technique. The final index is reproduced below:

<sup>43</sup> It is true that Warner also recommends its use as a standard "socio-economic status" scale. However, he devotes little attention to its use as such an instrument, and, in any event, such scales have grave conceptual deficiencies. See chap. vii.

WARNER'S INDEX OF STATUS CHARACTERISTICS (I.S.C.)<sup>44</sup>

<i>Status Characteristic</i>	<i>Rating (1 through 7)</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Weighted Rating</i>
Occupation.....	.....	x 4 =	
Source of Income.....	.....	x 3 =	
House Type.....	.....	x 3 =	
Dwelling Area.....	.....	x 2 =	
<i>Weighted Total</i>			

Any person or family rated could thus receive a score ranging from twelve (highest status) to eighty-four (lowest status). The final step was to convert these scores, by means of a regression equation, into predictors of status group placement. Thus it was found, for instance, that a score within the band twelve to twenty-two indicated upper class placement, whereas a score of from fifty-two to sixty-six predicted upper-lower class position. As a validation test, the index was used to predict the class placement of the Old American group whose E.P. ratings, of course, were already known. Correct placement was made in 84 per cent of the cases, leaving a margin of error of only 16 per cent.

There are several comments that need to be made about this index. First, it has been criticized on the grounds that there are subjective status ratings based on inspection of community prestige values involved in the construction and scoring of the seven-point scales which make it up, and therefore this makes the correlation with E. P. spurious or "circular."<sup>45</sup> This criticism is irrelevant and misses the point, although interestingly enough the assumption on which it is based seems to be shared by Warner himself.<sup>46</sup> The basic function of an index of this type is to facilitate status placement. The factors used are selected because they make it easier to perform this placement within an acceptable margin of error. That these factors overlap the original status place-

<sup>44</sup> Adapted from *Social Class in America*, p. 41.

<sup>45</sup> See Oswald Hall, review of *Social Class in America*, in *American Journal of Sociology*, LVI (Jan., 1951), 366-68.

<sup>46</sup> See his remark, "While placing the individuals who compose the sample to be used for the I.S.C., particular care should be exercised to be sure that mention of the characteristics of the I.S.C. are eliminated in order to guarantee that only Evaluated Participation is being considered." *Social Class in America*, p. 115.

ment technique itself is both irrelevant and to be expected. The fact that occupational position is an important consideration in the way a person places another person status-wise does not mean that occupation should be left out of an index of status placement. The point is simply that the nature of a person's occupation is easier to get than status remarks made about him by a group of other people.

A more formidable criticism arises out of the fact that, since two of the index factors, house type and dwelling area, demand subjective judgments by the researcher (What is a "good" house or a "fair" house, or how does one distinguish between a "high" dwelling area and an "above average" dwelling area? Warner's explanatory comments are helpful but do not solve this problem), the objective nature of the scale is eroded and its reliability is reduced. Certainly this point needs further exploration in the way of studies of rater reliability in scoring these items.

Pfautz and Duncan have pointed out that while Warner provides the over-all prediction error of 16 per cent for the I.S.C., he does not reveal the percentage of prediction error in each class. By piecing together data from two tables in *Social Class in America* they attempt to rectify this omission. While their attempt is laudable, analysis of the data reveals that they have projected a curious error themselves. Since the error is crucial to the point at issue, it will be reviewed here.

Warner's Table 10 contains, in a Total column, a breakdown

PERTINENT PORTION OF WARNER'S TABLE 10  
SOCIAL CLASS (AS DETERMINED BY E.P.) OF SAMPLE OF OLD AMERICANS  
USED AS VALIDATION GROUP

<i>Social Class</i> (E.P.)	<i>Total No.</i>
Upper Class . . . . .	44
Upper-Middle Class . . . . .	50
Lower-Middle Class . . . . .	44
Upper-Lower Class . . . . .	28
Lower-Lower Class . . . . .	43
<i>Total</i> . . . . .	209



of the "Old American" validation group (209 families) by class as determined by E.P. This information is reproduced on the preceding page.

Warner's Table 30 shows the distribution of the total of thirty-three errors in class prediction by the I.S.C. according to whether the I.S.C. overpredicted or underpredicted the E.P. class, and also classifies the errors in categories determined by the analyst. The latter point is irrelevant for this issue and only the pertinent portion of this table is reproduced below.

PERTINENT PORTION OF WARNER'S TABLE 30  
ERRORS IN I.S.C. PREDICTION OF E.P. CLASS,  
BY TYPE OF PREDICTION ERROR

	Social Class		[Errors]
	Predicted (I.S.C.)	Actual (E.P.)	Number of Families
[Over-predicted by I.S.C.]	Upper	Upper-Middle	8
	Upper-Middle	Lower-Middle	7
	Lower-Middle	Upper-Lower	2
	Upper-Lower	Lower-Lower	6
[Under-predicted by I.S.C.]	Upper-Middle	Upper	4
	Lower-Middle	Upper-Middle	1
	Upper-Lower	Lower-Middle	3
	Lower-Lower	Upper-Lower	2

Source: *Social Class in America*, p. 212.

From these two tables Pfautz and Duncan have constructed their own table. See below.

PFAUTZ AND DUNCAN TABLE

TABLE 1. ERRORS IN PREDICTING CLASS LEVEL (AS DETERMINED BY E.P.) FROM I.S.C. SCORES, FOR THE SAMPLE OF OLD AMERICANS

Social Class (as determined by E.P.)	Number in sample	Number of errors*	Percentage error
Upper . . . . .	44	8	18
Upper-Middle . . . . .	50	11	22
Lower-Middle . . . . .	44	3	7
Upper-Lower . . . . .	28	9	32
Lower-Lower . . . . .	43	2	5
All Classes . . . . .	209	33	16

\*The number of errors is given for only 200 of the 209 cases in the sample.

Source: Data abstracted from Tables 10 and 30, *Social Class in America*, *op. cit.*

Source of above table: Harold W. Pfautz and Otis Dudley Duncan, "A Critical Evaluation of Warner's Work in Community Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, XV (April, 1950), 209.

They then point to the wide variation in prediction errors for the different classes, calling attention to the fact that the percentage of error for three of the classes exceeds the overall error of 16 per cent and particularly to the large error of 32 per cent for the upper-lower class.<sup>47</sup>

Careful inspection of Warner's Table 30, as partially reproduced above, will reveal the Pfautz and Duncan error. In their column "Number of errors," they have added, to secure the total number of errors for each class, *not* the total number of families from each E.P. class which were misplaced by the I.S.C., which is the correct procedure in view of their later division, but the total number of families who were predicted *into* each class incorrectly by the I.S.C. Then they have divided this figure by the total number of families in the E.P. class. This is obviously statistically meaningless.<sup>48</sup>

We give the revised table, with the additions made correctly, below (Table 1).

TABLE 1. ERRORS IN PREDICTING CLASS LEVEL (AS DETERMINED BY E.P.) FROM I.S.C. SCORES, BY E.P. CLASS, FOR THE SAMPLE OF OLD AMERICANS\*

<i>Social Class (as determined by E.P.)</i>	<i>Number in sample</i>	<i>Number of errors in each E.P. Class</i>	<i>Percentage error</i>
Upper.....	44	4	9
Upper-Middle.....	50	9	18
Lower-Middle.....	44	10	23
Upper-Lower.....	28	4	14
Lower-Lower.....	43	6	14
All Classes.....	209	33	16

\*The number of errors is given for only 200 of the 209 cases in the sample.  
Source: Data abstracted from Tables 10 and 30, *Social Class in America*.

The table now shows that only two of the E.P. classes have error percentages which exceed the total error of 16 per cent and the largest class error is only 23 per cent. This distribution is not greatly out of line with the over-all figure, though it is helpful

<sup>47</sup> Pfautz and Duncan, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

<sup>48</sup> It would have been possible, of course, for Pfautz and Duncan to have divided their additions by the total number of I.S.C. predictions for each class, had such data been available. In that case their results would have given the percentage of each I.S.C. class incorrectly predicted.

to have the additional information for interpretation of the predictive powers of the index.

Our fourth comment on the I.S.C. concerns the implications of its validating criterion. This criterion was the 209 Old American families (with adjustments made on the basis of about 130 additional ethnic families) whose E.P. status had been determined. Thus the essential validity of the I.S.C. rests squarely on the validity of the E.P. technique, the general shortcomings of which have been discussed above. Moreover, since all doubtful cases of E.P. placement were discarded, the index, logically, can claim to predict the social status level only of those who have definite status-level placement in the Warner sense. Since Warner never tells us what percentage of residents was discarded, or how to identify them easily, we can never be sure in applying the I.S.C. whether we are applying it to the kind of status-placement person on whom the scale was originally validated. And, finally, the question of its applicability to other communities is a large and open one. Warner concedes that it might be desirable to validate it anew after securing a new E. P. criterion group, but also suggests that "where a close approximation is sufficient," the index may be used in other communities without such revalidation. No quantitative data are offered to support this claim, and obviously the question is bound up with the larger issue of whether the status orders of communities of various sizes and types are comparable to the status system delineated by Warner for Jonesville.<sup>49</sup>

In short, the Index of Status Characteristics is not the apocalyptic instrument for measuring the social status position of virtually all Americans which Warner, in his more ebullient passages, implies it to be, nor is it as faulty as some of its critics have alleged. Its ability to predict the status groups to which persons in various communities belong is problematical because of the problematical nature of the issue itself. As a rough measure of the *relative* social status of persons in small cities, however, it is

<sup>49</sup> Warner suggests that in larger communities changes might be made in the categories of the seven-point scales (e.g., business size, rating of occupations) to allow for differences in status valuation (*Social Class in America*, p. 158), but he does not face the problem of what this signifies for the congruence of the class levels thus ascertained with those in Jonesville.

probably at least as adequate as any of the standard "socio-economic status" scales currently in use, and its conceptualization is superior to these since it is defined and validated on one dimension of stratification—social status.<sup>50</sup> It is certainly the most clearly articulated and presented of the Warner techniques of status placement.

*Social Mobility.* With the exception of some inferential trend data on the mobility of ethnic groups in Yankee City<sup>51</sup> there are no quantitative materials on social mobility in the Warner community studies. That is, there is no study of how many persons move from one status group to another over a given period of time. The researches are largely trendless. However, there are qualitative materials which Warner weaves into a picture of how social mobility, in his terms, is achieved and what the dynamics of the process are.

According to this picture, there are at least four basic prerequisites for successful upward mobility: (a) acquisition of the correct material symbols, including a house in the "right" neighborhood—this, of course, requires a rise in income or wealth; (b) increasing occupational status; (c) a change in clique and associational memberships, and, in some cases, minimization of previous family relationships and contacts; and (d) a change of behavior and values in accordance with those of the sought-after higher class. These factors or techniques also serve as barriers, for the persons who fail to make the necessary changes in the indicated areas are <sup>are not</sup> unsuccessful in their <sup>downward</sup> attempted climb. In this sense, members of the class above always hold a key position, for it is only by means of their assent that the new clique and associational relationships may be established. Downward mobility also takes place through the same channels. In brief, social mobility is achieved by translating income and occupational changes into appropriate cultural behavior and social relationships.

The two principal leverage points for beginning the upward climb, according to Warner, are occupational advancement and the educational system. But his analysis of factory operations in

<sup>50</sup> See our discussion of this point in chap. vii.

<sup>51</sup> See *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*, chaps. ii-v.



Yankee City and Jonesville, and a special study of a strike in the former city<sup>52</sup> reveal that because of a "break in the skill hierarchy," whereby factory workers engage in increasingly mechanized and less skilled operations while technical and managerial personnel are brought in from the college-educated group, shop workers no longer have the traditional opportunity to rise from the plant floor and advance on the occupational ladder. Thus this channel of social mobility is being blocked. Moreover, a large portion of the lower-class children are unsuccessful in the schools, and either drop out because of lack of culturally generated motivations in the home and social environment and because their behavior clashes with the middle-class values of the school system, or are shunted into the high-school commercial and "shop" courses which are dead-end streets in terms of higher education. Thus Warner presents an inferential picture of declining social mobility which, he asserts, calls for corrective measures if the traditional fluidity of the American class system is to be preserved.<sup>53</sup>

Warner's findings and discussion on the cultural dynamics in social mobility we believe constitute an accomplishment of major importance. Traditional discussions of mobility have been carried on largely within the confines of an economic-occupational framework. To focus on the cultural behavior patterns which, when internalized in lower class individuals, hinder them from acquiring the tools and techniques of advancement, adds a necessary dimension to the analysis of social mobility and reveals that the handicaps of lower-class origin are, in a real sense, doubled. Not only is there objective deprivation; there is subjective deprivation in the socialization process, and the subjective deprivation is much the harder to overcome and potentially of crucial importance for achievement in the objective realms of economic and occupational life.

Nevertheless, the materials on mobility in these studies show some important omissions and "blind spots." As Lipset and Bendix have pointed out, the preoccupation with mobility on the *status* dimension and with *individual* mobility has excluded a consideration of mobility on the economic dimension through

<sup>52</sup> See *The Social System of a Modern Factory*.

<sup>53</sup> See his *American Life*, chap. v.

collective action. Thus, labor union organization appears to be interpreted by Warner as a mobility defeat whereas, in fact, it has advanced the economic power and position of blue-collar workers in considerable degree.<sup>54</sup> One of the more interesting questions on the current American scene is what this collective economic mobility on the part of organized laborers means for status considerations *vis à vis* lower white-collar workers and small salaried professionals. Nowhere does Warner appear to engage this question; yet it is one which grows daily in importance for an understanding of American class dynamics.

A second omission is that the Warner researches pay little attention to the persons who have left these small communities to seek fame and fortune elsewhere. Many of these, as Florence Kluckhohn points out, will be the most ambitious and achievement-minded people in the community. Thus Kluckhohn's question becomes most pertinent: "Why, since . . . it has long been recognized that a definite relationship exists between horizontal mobility and vertical mobility in the American scene, was horizontal mobility so arbitrarily ignored?"<sup>55</sup>

Consideration of these points would have added breadth and depth to the Warner discussion of social mobility and perhaps have tempered his conclusions.

*Ethnic stratification.* There is a considerable amount of valuable information in both the Yankee City and the Jonesville reports on the role of ethnic groups<sup>56</sup> in the general life and the class system of these communities.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Lipset and Bendix, "Social Status and Social Structure: A Re-examination of Data and Interpretations: II," p. 237.

<sup>55</sup> F. Kluckhohn, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

<sup>56</sup> Oscar Handlin claims that Warner has overestimated the number and percentage of "Yankees" in Yankee City, since historical census data show that many of the "Yankees" must have had immigrant origin of the vintage 1840-1930. He criticizes Warner for using definitions of "Yankee" and "ethnic" based on attitudes of members of the community (and, he might have added, social participation). (See his review of *The Social Life of a Modern Community* and *The Status System of a Modern Community* in *The New England Quarterly*, XV [Sept., 1942], 554-57; also review of *American Life* in the *New Leader*, Sept. 21, 1953, pp. 25-26.) Lipset and Bendix join in this criticism.

While Warner might well have devoted more attention to this point and its implications, he did specify that a small number of the Yankees were descendants of French Huguenot and German Jewish families who had assimilated, and that a larger number were of recent Canadian, English, North Irish, and Scotch immi-

In Yankee City, according to Warner's description, persons still identified as of Irish descent have progressed as far as the lower-upper class, while French-Canadians, Jews, Italians, Armenians, and Greeks are represented as high as the upper-middle, although in varying proportions. In Jonesville a few Irish Catholics are apparently participating in the upper class, while a few persons from the Norwegian minority, the largest in the community, have achieved upper-middle class status. For the most part, however, the ethnic minorities are bunched in the lower half of the class system, particularly at the upper-lower level but with strong representation also in the lower-middle group.

In general, each ethnic group is described as having its own social subsystem oriented around the ethnic church and ethnically restricted associations, some church-sponsored, others not. A valuable picture is presented of the way in which social mobility strivings tend to pull the ethnic individual out of his subsystem towards the general American class system. Socially mobile ethnics thus tend to enter a period of marginality. In Jonesville, even some of the non-mobile Norwegians at the lower class levels are pulling away from the ethnic group.

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gration. All of them had been accepted as Yankees by the population. (See *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, p. 213.) This fits in with general patterns of social psychological definition of ethnics and Yankees in American communities. Furthermore, the concept of ethnic group, in its sociological sense, is precisely a matter of community identification and social participation. If subjective definitions are not used, it becomes impossible to study the relationship of current sociological reality in the community to the historical facts of immigration (or racial) ancestry.

<sup>57</sup> We do not propose to deal here with the Warner-oriented studies of the American Negro, or, in detail, with the controversy which has arisen over his use of the term "caste," to describe the social system of Negro-white relationships. For this controversy, see W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII (Sept., 1936), 234-37, and his introduction to Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *Deep South*; Oliver C. Cox, "Race and Caste: A Distinction," *American Journal of Sociology*, L (March, 1945), 360-68, and "The Modern Caste School of Race Relations," *Social Forces*, XXI (Dec., 1942), 218-26; and Maxwell R. Brooks, "American Class and Caste: An Appraisal," *Social Forces*, XXV (Dec., 1946), 207-11.

Fundamentally, it seems to be a question of comparing the "ideal type" system of caste relations as it has traditionally existed in India with Negro-white relationships in the United States, and making an arbitrary judgment as to whether there are enough points of similarity to warrant using the same term for both phenomena. In other words, it is a semantic rather than a substantive problem and its dimensions are changing rapidly as changes occur in both Negro-white relationships in American and caste relationships in India.



One of Warner's principal theses appears to be that members of ethnic groups in American life may participate comfortably in the ethnic subsystem as long as they do not rise above the lower-middle class, whereas upper-middle or higher class position implies breaking away from the ethnic group to a position initially of marginality and eventually of incorporation into the dominant group. Thus his prognosis for nonracial ethnic groups on the American scene is that most of them will decrease in size and importance and probably eventually disappear.<sup>58</sup>

Here, again, Warner's preoccupation with small communities and his extrapolation of processes from these communities to the general American scene leads him onto dubious ground. In small towns and cities the number of members in each ethnic group frequently is so small, in absolute terms, and so few have reached upper-middle class status as a result of general immigration history and the out-migration of many socially mobile members of the second and third generation, that a sub-system composed of upper-middle class ethnics is impossible. Thus those that do reach this status are drawn into Old American social relationships. However, in the larger cities and metropolitan areas, upper-middle class and even upper class ethnics are so numerous that they can and do develop their own social systems of primary and associational relationships within the ethnic framework.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore such a process may develop even in the smaller cities as large numbers of ethnics move into the upper-middle class. In fact, the ability of ethnic groups in America to develop and maintain their own subsystems at all class levels is

<sup>58</sup> *American Life*, p. 171.

<sup>59</sup> For a theoretical discussion of this point see Milton M. Gordon, "Social Structure and Goals in Group Relations," in *Freedom and Control in Modern Society*, ed. Morroe Berger, Theodore Abel, and Charles H. Page (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1954), 141-57. Empirical evidence is gradually accumulating; see August B. Hollingshead, "Trends in Social Stratification: A Case Study," *American Sociological Review*, XVII (Dec., 1952), pp. 685-86, and E. Digby Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1958).

See also Warner and associates, *Democracy in Jonesville*, p. 180, in which Warner's collaborator, Donald Wray, shows an implicit awareness of this point in his remark concerning upper-middle class Norwegians in Jonesville: "There are so few Norse in this class that they could not enforce sectarian standards if they wished and could not create a separate social group of their own at that class level."



one of the most important sociological phenomena of American life and lends small support to the view that ethnic minorities not based on race will, within any foreseeable period of time, decline virtually to the vanishing point on the American scene.

Our concluding comments on the Warner school will deal briefly with three issues: (a) some relationships between his theory and method, with reference to the problem of their application to larger cities and metropolises; (b) the question which has been raised in the critical literature of his "values" with regard to the American class system; and (c) the general nature of the contribution which he and his associates have made to the scientific study of social class in America.

A quick codification of Warner's social theory reminds us that his classes are conceived of as status groups which have social psychological reality in the minds of residents and which consist of people who participate with one another in social relationships. Residents in the community know or know of one another, by and large, and are able to place one another in the status group hierarchy. How, his critics have asked, can a system such as this be extrapolated to large urban communities where relationships tend toward impersonality and where any given person knows only a tiny percentage of the city's population? Warner has never really answered them except by categorical assertion.

It is possible that there is no valid answer and that the system is inapplicable to large communities. However, careful inspection of the factors involved will show that they are separable and that hypothetically, at least, some of them may be applicable to the larger urban scene. It is quite possible that status groups exist as *social psychological constructs* in the minds of large city residents even though most of the residents are not known to one another personally. In fact, the existence of the well known ecological status referents—e.g., "Main Line," "Beacon Hill," "Gold Coast," and their variously downgraded counterparts—suggest that some such constructs do, in fact, operate. It is possible, further, that such status group constructs embrace the concept of social participation in a *potential* sense. Thus the urban resident will know personally only his own small circle of friends and acquaint-

tances but he may have a rough psychological construct of the boundaries delimiting the kinds of persons whom he considers to be like him in values, behavior, and interests, and with whom he would feel comfortable in social relationships. Thus he has the concept of potential participants in his social world. If such is the case (and it is offered only as a hypothesis), it cannot, of course, be uncovered, except possibly at the Social Register level, by the Warner method of asking people to name families who belong to various status levels. But it can be explored through sophisticated, intensive interviewing and the study of the range of actual social participation as a check. At any rate, it is a hypothesis which should not be rejected categorically.

Any such research should, of course, be prepared to record and evaluate the significance of all variations in status conceptions that are found. But the fact that the lower classes may not distinguish between an upper and an upper-middle class does not necessarily signify that this distinction is not both meaningful in a social psychological sense for these latter classes and distinctly functional in life chances and social interaction at the level at which it is recognized. Does everyone in the forest have to hear the tree fall before we are allowed to conclude that it is truly on the ground?

Questions have been raised in the critical literature, notably by Lipset and Bendix,<sup>60</sup> about Warner's values in the social class area and their relationship to his system of social class analysis. Briefly stated, Warner's value position, as he has presented it throughout his writings, is that social inequality is functionally necessary in complex societies but that the channels of social mobility should be kept open. In effect, it is an endorsement of a fluid free-enterprise society with open classes wherein valid individual mobility strivings will be rewarded and those who fail to climb will learn to "adjust" to the "social reality" of the status system.<sup>61</sup> The major criticisms, as far as implications for his method are concerned, appear to be that such a value system causes him to ignore economic and power issues and collective

<sup>60</sup> Lipset and Bendix, "Social Status and Social Structure: A Re-examination of Data and Interpretations: I and II," *passim*.

<sup>61</sup> For Warner's statement of his value position, see particularly *Social Class in America*, Introduction and chap. i, and *American Life*, chap. v.

efforts to advance in the economic and power hierarchies, and to concentrate on forces of tradition (social status) rather than factors making for social change.

We have already analyzed in detail Warner's handling of economic and power factors and concluded that while he has not dealt with their interrelationships with social status in the historical dimension, he has by no means neglected the structural and some of the dynamic interrelationships of these factors in the present. The charge that Warner has neglected the role of labor unions in securing greater economic and political power for industrial workers and the consequent implications for the dynamics of American social stratification is, we believe, well taken. But Warner's findings are not unrelated to problems of social change. Whatever his interpretation and assessment of the *desirability* of labor organization, his description and discussion of the relationship between blocked individual social mobility and the rise of unionism in the communities he has studied is relevant and plausible and throws light on this phenomenon.

Ironically, both Warner and his critics appear to have missed the point that his findings on the role of status dynamics and the cultural implications of class position have considerable potential significance with regard to lower-class discontent and radical activity. Lower-class people have always known that they suffered material disadvantages as a result of being born on the lower end of the economic ladder. To be confirmed in their suspicion that the upper classes look down on them as status inferiors and to be informed, on the basis of scientific investigation, that their chances of rising are further restricted by virtue of the fact that they culturally acquire behavior patterns and learn ways of life which are thoroughly disadvantageous is not likely to increase their satisfaction with the status quo! Thus, whatever his values in the matter, Warner's findings, if widely disseminated in the society, might well logically have the effect of making the lower classes more rather than less dissatisfied with their collective lot.

Throughout this chapter we have noted many of the deficiencies in Warner's techniques, his failure to articulate his procedures clearly, his lack of involvement with some of the important problems of American stratification, and his extravagant

*a priori* extrapolation of his findings in small cities to the rest of America. When to these items are added a studied avoidance in his published work of real engagement with the analyses and reports of other theorists and researchers in social stratification and what they mean for his own research, the causes of the critical barrage which he has elicited will be readily understood. Nevertheless, as we have pointed out, not all of the criticisms have been merited. Moreover, the positive contributions which he and his associates have made through their busy labors in the small cities of America have been substantial. They have raised the issue of status dynamics in the community setting to a point where it can no longer be ignored in American sociology as a major dimension of stratification analysis. By means of clique and associational study they have focused highly desirable attention on the implications of status considerations for a significant sector of social organization. Their description of the cultural behavior correlates of status and their meaning for personality development and social mobility constitutes a major accomplishment. And their willingness—even eagerness—to devote disproportionate efforts to studying the upper classes in American communities has not been without its compensating features, for the sociological discipline in this country, with its traditional orientation to “social problems” and its relatively easy access to the homes and lives of underprivileged groups and slum dwellers, has been focused excessively on the lower classes. If one wishes to understand the *system*, he must study the top as well as the bottom, because it is the top which exercises control. All in all, American sociology owes more of a debt to this social anthropologist who transferred his attention from the aborigines of the Australian bush to the good citizens of Yankee City than has hitherto been acknowledged.



## Other Community Studies

In this chapter we shall be dealing with selected studies of stratification made in specific localities or communities during the period under discussion and not subsumed under the Ecological, Lynd, or Warner schools. The field of community studies is a large and somewhat amorphous one; thus it is necessary to indicate the types of studies which will be excluded from, as well as included in, the ensuing analysis. Hollingshead, in an historical and analytical review of community studies,<sup>1</sup> distinguishes three types of modern studies of community life: the ecological, the typological, and the structural. The ecological type has been dealt with; the typological, which attempts to characterize a community, or some section of it, in terms of some "ideal-typical" concept, will not be considered here;<sup>2</sup> this leaves the structural type, that is, that which is concerned primarily with social stratification, as the subject matter of this chapter.

We are, at this point, using that concept of community which demands a spatial base, although in the concluding chapter we shall have occasion to consider the relationship of spatially based to nonspatially oriented social structures. Moreover, for the most part, only those studies which are concerned with the stratification of an entire community, and in which such stratification and its

<sup>1</sup> August B. Hollingshead, "Community Research: Development and Present Condition," *American Sociological Review*, XIII (April, 1948), 136-46.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.* for a list of examples of this type.

various correlates constitute a major, rather than incidental, orientation of the research will be included.

In terms of these criteria, thirteen studies have been selected for attention in this chapter. Since our primary interest is methodological, our grouping and classification of these studies will similarly be based on methodology, i.e., rationale and techniques of stratification, rather than on the nature of the community. These studies, representing the major types distinguished below, fall into four groups according to the way in which stratification has been defined and carried out in the particular community. We shall call this the "definition-ascertainment" pattern, and our major attention will be devoted to the nature of these patterns. The typology follows.

1. *Status-researcher rated*: In these studies, class stratification is implicitly or explicitly defined as status stratification. Conceptions of status may vary, and these variations will be considered. The ascertainment process—that is, the process of determining which individuals or families belong in which class or status group—is predominantly an "impressionistic" rating by the researcher.

2. *Status-community rated*: As in type 1, stratification is defined by some form of status category. Ascertainment consists of a formal rating procedure, carried out, after appropriate instructions, by various members of the community. Some form of average of the ratings is then used to describe the status position of a given individual or family.

3. *Occupation-income, or their combination*: These are grouped together here to indicate a pattern using certain objective factors in the stratification process. However, if the criterion of class is occupational, the explicit or implicit assumption is usually that the hierarchy of occupations indicates a hierarchy of statuses. In one case, a combination of occupation and income factors is used. In these studies the ascertainment process is the relatively simple one of securing the respondent's occupation or/and income.

4. *Intimate friendship or social visiting pattern*: This is the least crystallized and articulated pattern, but one with considerable potential significance for class analysis. In the two rather experimental studies which fall under this classification, attempts are

made to determine the friendship or visiting pattern in a community and to find out what factors are associated with such intimate relationships. They are included here, not because they contain a clear definition of social class in terms of such relationships, but because of the preliminary light they throw on the possibility of such a definition.

### Studies of the Status-Researcher Rated Type

In this group fall studies by Dollard, Powdermaker, Blumenthal, and West.

Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*<sup>3</sup> is a study made in the middle thirties of a small town of approximately twenty-five hundred population and its surrounding rural area in the Deep South. Techniques used were participant observation by the sole researcher and author and interviews, informal and formal, ranging in intensity up to the obtaining of life histories of nine Negro adults by means of a "greatly modified psychoanalytic technique." The focus of the study is on the psychological correlates of the social structure: "The aim of the study is to grasp and describe the emotional structure which runs parallel to the formal social structure in the community."<sup>4</sup> The social structure of "Southerntown" and environs is described as a caste system—that is, endogamous white and Negro groups existing in a pattern of superordinate and subordinate status and power—with a threefold class system within each "caste." Economic, sexual, and prestige gains accruing to the whites—particularly the white middle class—in the maintenance of their superordinate position over the Negro are described; and considerable emphasis is placed on various aspects of the "frustration-aggression" theory, namely that the frustrations in human experience produce aggressive emotions which are released in aggressive acts, direct or deviously disguised, against the source of the frustration or against others.

Dollard offers no formal definition of class. However, he

<sup>3</sup> John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

refers to caste and class as a "status order,"<sup>5</sup> and in numerous incidental remarks makes it reasonably clear that his class system revolves around the concept of status. Moreover, he acknowledges the receipt of a major orientation to class from Warner, although the Warner definitions, as such, are not given or elaborated on. Closely associated with status, however, are behavior differences: "... class distinctions are ways of dividing people according to the behavior expected of them in the society."<sup>6</sup> Within the white caste, he distinguishes three classes: lower, middle, and upper. The ascertainment process, in essence, is an informal rating procedure carried out by Dollard himself, although the implication is present that these status distinctions are recognized by the community itself. The lower-class whites are identified as the cotton-growing sharecroppers and renters of the outlying agricultural area;<sup>7</sup> the middle-class whites seem to constitute most of the white population of the town itself; and the upper class is "little represented" in Southerntown, although we are told that the members of this group, for the South as a whole, are the descendants of an ante-Bellum aristocracy and are given to a kind of mutually reinforced ancestor worship. Within the Negro group, the lower class is also made up of tenants and sharecroppers. This group is "at the bottom of the economic and social system." However, some land-owning Negroes are "in or on the edge of the middle class." Middleclass Negroes are "mostly teachers and ministers of the gospel" and a few other professional and business men. There are few or no upper-class Negroes in the Southerntown area. This leaves the vast majority of the Negroes within Southerntown itself (half the population) unaccounted for in the class system, and this omission is never directly cleared up. However, Dollard later states that the "Negro population is divided between a great mass of lower-class Negroes and a film of middle-class people,"<sup>8</sup> so that, presumably, most of the town Negroes are also lower class.

On the basis of observation and interview material, Dollard

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> These are the so-called "Poor Whites" of the South. Leonard W. Doob contributes an appendix dealing more intensively with this group.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.



associates (in nonquantitative form) a host of differential behavior and attitudinal traits with the respective classes, white and Negro, which cannot be gone into in detail. In addition to those implicit in differences in income and occupation, he makes a great deal of differentials in impulse gratification, his essential thesis being that the middle-class way of life in both groups is characterized by a systematic inhibition of sexual, aggressive, and general pleasure impulses for the sake of obtaining or maintaining middle-class status, in contrast to the lower-class pattern which is more impulse-free. The upper-class white is placed in an intermediate position on this scale.<sup>9</sup> Dollard thus raises the very important, though difficult, question of how personal happiness is associated with class position. We may note that traditional discussions of class in American society assume that the opportunities for well-being and happiness vary directly with class position. This is borne out by the use of such terms as the "underprivileged" *vs.* the "privileged" classes. Such judgments are, of course, made on the basis of familiar differences in status, power, and material possessions (including nutrition, health care, etc.). But if the gains of middle-class life are bought at the expense of severe impulse renunciation, any total assessment of happiness or well-being must balance these gains and losses. Obviously, the entire question is a difficult though intriguing one, involving the need for further research and intensive coming to grips with the nature of the socialization process, and, in the last analysis it is, perhaps, irresolvable outside of a frank resort to value-judgments. But it is a question which students of stratification cannot avoid.

Powdermaker's *After Freedom*<sup>10</sup> is a study of the same Southern town investigated by Dollard and was carried out during approximately the same period. It therefore provides an interesting opportunity to compare the findings in stratification and correlates made by separate investigators, both using an "impressionistic"

<sup>9</sup> A similar set of observations is made in Davis and the Gardners' *Deep South*. For a stimulating discussion of the middle class environment and certain possible negative aspects of its role in the socialization process, see Arnold W. Green, "The Middle Class Male Child and Neurosis," *American Sociological Review*, XI (Feb., 1946), 31-41.

<sup>10</sup> Hortense Powdermaker, *After Freedom* (New York: The Viking Press, 1939).

researcher-rating procedure. Powdermaker's focus is primarily on the Negro, but she deals with the white community in terms of its structure and its relationships with the Negro group. Participant observation and interviews were the principal techniques relied on, although, in addition, she makes limited use of the results of a questionnaire administered to whites on attitudes toward the Negro. Less than half the questionnaires were returned, however, raising the question of selectivity in answering.

Powdermaker defines class briefly as a status group:

For a definition of class as used here, it would be difficult to improve upon the statement of Dr. Donald Young: "A social class may be said to be an interest group to which public opinion attaches a higher or lower status with reference to some other social class or classes."<sup>11</sup>

Ascertainment consists of an informal rating performed by the researcher. Her outline of the class structure of the white group parallels that of Dollard. It is threefold, consisting, in ascending order, of the "Poor Whites," who farm in the outlying area; the middle class, which takes in all the white townspeople; and the "aristocracy," who are not represented in "Cottonville" (her own pseudonym) but who are there as a kind of felt tradition. Her outline of the class structure of the Negro group, however, differs materially from Dollard's. Whereas for Dollard most Negroes belonged to the lower class, with a small top level of middle class, and virtually no upper class, Powdermaker's scheme for the local Negro community is as follows: an upper class, small in number; a large middle class, divided into an upper-middle, a "borderline" middle, and a lower-middle; and a lower class, somewhat larger than the upper class, but smaller than the middle class. It is evident, therefore, that she has attempted to make finer distinctions within the Negro group and has drawn her class lines at different levels from Dollard's. We are told, however, that "The Negro classes are by no means to be equated with the White classes in the same relative positions. The criteria which separate them are quite different, as are their relations to the classes above and below them."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14, n. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Here, of course, is revealed the major difficulty of the impressionistic researcher-rated method of class ascertainment. Without further research and a more objective method, there is no way of knowing whether Dollard's or Powdermaker's description of the class structure of the Negro community in this Southern town is the more correct or useful one.

Powdermaker concurs with Dollard in asserting that higher class status, at least in the Negro group, is closely related to the adoption of a way of life involving considerable impulse renunciation and restraint in sex life, aggressive acts, and emotional expression; she is, however, cautious about making inferences as to relative satisfaction or happiness.

With regard to another significant point, however, Powdermaker and Dollard differ. While both agree that the upper-class white harbors the least hostility toward the Negro, Powdermaker states that the Poor Whites are most hostile, while Dollard reports that his Negro informants declare that the middle-class whites bear the most hostility towards the colored group. Again, without some objective measuring technique, it is impossible to know which picture is the more correct one. Both investigators agree that the Poor Whites are generally scorned and disliked by the other white classes and return considerable resentment. Moreover, our selection of points of difference between the two studies to illustrate the technical difficulties involved in the researcher-rated or "impressionistic" type of class analysis should not obscure the fact that both investigators have produced rich and valuable accounts of life in this Southern community which are not basically dissimilar in fact and insight.

Blumenthal's *Small-Town Stuff*<sup>13</sup> is a study, conducted in the early thirties, of a small mining town of approximately fourteen hundred population situated in the Rocky Mountains. The principal techniques used by the researcher were those of participant observation and informal interviews. Available records were also used. An attempt is made to give a rounded picture of life in the town, with special emphasis on community social control in the form of informal public opinion and "gossip," the func-

<sup>13</sup> Albert Blumenthal, *Small Town Stuff* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932).

tioning of institutions such as the family, the school, the church, and politics, and the course and effects of social change. Some attention is paid to social stratification.

Blumenthal uses terms such as "upper classes," "lower [classes]," "upper social strata," "four hundred," "near four hundred," "the elite of the town," "middle class people," "social status," "social hierarchy," "social ladder," etc., in describing the affairs of the community—all of which make it clear that he is concerned with a status stratification of the population. At one point he declares that this status ranking is based on a combination of status factors:

When one person rates another as different from other persons in a particular respect he may always have a certain amount of feeling that the one is "better than," more desirable than, or "not as good as" others for having that trait. But people are rated on many points. They are placed high in one respect and low in another. The sum of all these ratings of "higher than" and "lower than" determines the person's position on the social scale. A woman's poor looks, ignorance, and dubious sex morals are readily counteracted by her husband's high financial standing, the traditional position of her family on the social scale, or by her excellent singing voice. In fact, there have been instances in which families have reached the top of Mineville's social ladder despite their having been notoriously lacking in money, business success, professional achievement, sex morals, intelligence, artistic accomplishments, pleasing personal appearance, or high nationality rating. On the other hand, there have been others who have been unable to attain the very top rungs even with a generous amount of most of these criteria. None, however, has surmounted the ordinary race barriers, and the stronger nationality obstacles are overcome with great difficulty.<sup>14</sup>

Elsewhere, however, he points out that membership in the "four hundred" has usually been a function of the husband's high position in the mining industry, or upon his being a business or professional man "of note" in the community. Moreover, a part of his analysis is based on a division of the population into the business and professional men on the one hand, and the "average man" in "Mineville" on the other, who "earns his living in the

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 155-56.



mines or mills." At another point, he selects and describes the seven families who comprise the "four hundred." This "four hundred" is "not a well-knit group." Still, "when *most* members of the 'four hundred' entertain they tend to entertain one another rather than to stoop to lower social levels. . . ." <sup>15</sup>

In summation, one might say that the definition of class is in terms of an average of status factors (themselves not too clearly defined), the ascertainment process is performed at selected points by the researcher, but that no systematic stratification of the community is attempted.

West's *Plainville, U. S. A.*<sup>16</sup> is of particular interest in class analysis, for one of West's original field requirements was that of a community with little or no socio-economic stratification, and in his first contact with the little town of 275 people and surrounding farms in the southern Midwest, in 1939, he was assured by the residents that no social class distinctions existed. However, after an initial period of field work, he realized that he was dealing with "a discrimination system of enormous complexity." Accordingly, the stratification system of the town and surrounding rural area became one of the focal points of the research along with "acculturation" (to the urban and "modern" forces in American life) and "socialization." The techniques used were those of participant observation, formal and informal interviews, the collection of life histories, and analysis of available records, newspaper accounts, etc.

West defines Plainville's class system as a system of "rank" or status, closely associated with particular behavior patterns:

The class system of Plainville might well be called a "superorganization," because it provides for every person living there a master pattern for arranging according to relative rank every other individual, and every family, clique, lodge, club, church, and other organization or association in Plainville society. It provides also a set of patterns for expected behavior according to class, and a way of judging all norms and deviations from these norms in individual behavior.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>16</sup> James West (pseud.), *Plainville, U. S. A.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

He presents a picture of the class system as it appears to the "average 'better class' adult." In other words, the ascertainment process is his own ranking, based on "listening during fifteen months to hundreds of Plainville people discuss, criticize, ridicule, condemn, and approve their neighbors,"<sup>18</sup> and consists of his interpretation of the ranking which would be performed by those at the top of the status scale. Essentially, it is a two-class system with the lower class subdivided into three subclasses. About half of the community are in the "upper class," the other half are divided into, in descending rank, and in the appellations of the community, "good lower class people," "the lower element," and "people who live like animals." Most of the upper-class people farm on the prairie; most of the lower-class people farm in the hills. In fact, West lists a series of factors as the "criteria" of status position. These are ecology (prairie vs. hill farming), farming technology, lineage, wealth, "morals," and "manners," by which he means culture patterns or way of life. He attaches special significance to this last factor:

The sixth criterion of class is of enormous complexity, because it involves all the other criteria, renders them meaningful, and in a sense supersedes them. At the same time it governs interclass relationships and is critical in matters of class mobility. This criterion is "manners." The number of traits associated with manners is so nearly infinite that no effort can be made to describe them all. All relate in some way to the fundamental division of the society into two main "ways of life": the older, more isolated, and more self-subsistent hill life, and the newer, more up-to-date life on the prairie.<sup>19</sup>

This class system, it will be noted, deals only with the farm families. Residents of the town "belong to one or another of these classes as their lineage, wealth, income, morals, and whole way of life (their 'manners') fit them in."<sup>20</sup>

West makes a distinction between "class," or membership in a status group, and "respect," which is "relative rank within the class." In the upper class, "morals" are a crucial determinant of

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

"respect." In the lower class, "morals" aid in determining subclass lines.

The major weakness in the status-researcher rated studies, from the scientific point of view, lies in the ascertainment process. Since this process consists of a rating performed only by the researcher, it is, in the last analysis, a judgment made by one individual, usually an outsider, and invites the charges of "impressionism," "subjectivism," and malleability to the particular biases or emotional "sets" of the investigator. The discrepancies in the descriptions of the class system of the same Negro community given by Dollard and Powdermaker, respectively, offer an empirical demonstration of the dangers involved. On the other hand, there are several considerations which can be posed in defense of this method. First, the rating is performed by a specially trained observer, who presumably has no specific emotional involvements in the life of the community itself. Secondly, he bases his rating on the observation of status remarks and status or deference behavior; there is, in a sense, an *implicit quantitative basis* to his rating procedure. Thirdly, it is commonplace to accept without a great deal of question a trained anthropologist's description of the social organization of a preliterate society; therefore is it not justifiable to accept a trained social scientist's description of the social organization of a contemporary community (even though larger and more complex) with which he is even more familiar? In balance, however, the "impressionistic," researcher-rating technique of status stratification of a community must be considered as not meeting the scientific criterion of a verifiable status rating of community residents based on the quantitatively demonstrable attitudes or behavior of the residents themselves.

As we have indicated earlier, in the definition process there is always the question to be faced of whether the "classes" are definite groups or entities, or simply arbitrarily bounded portions of a continuum. With the possible exception of the Blumenthal study, the studies considered above, although they do not face this point directly, are "groupwise" oriented.

Finally, these studies have one other characteristic in common: the association of particular traits or attributes with respective

status groups (as, for instance, greater sex "morality" with the middle class) is performed, on the whole, qualitatively rather than quantitatively. Again, although an informal quantitative technique may be implicit here, it is not explicit, and few quantified associations are presented.

### Studies of the Status-Community Rated Type

This group includes studies by Hollingshead, Kaufman, Duncan and Artis, and Schuler.

Hollingshead's study, focused on the relationship of adolescents to the class structure,<sup>21</sup> deals with a Middle Western community ("Elmtown") of about ten thousand, including town and surrounding rural area, located in the heart of the corn belt. It is one of the most extensive of the community-rated studies yet to appear, and contains a thorough-going, documented analysis of the impact of the class structure on white teen-age youth. Information was obtained by means of interviews, participant observation, official records, tests, autobiographies, and other appropriate field techniques. The field work was carried out in 1941 and 1942. The study was made under the auspices of The Committee on Human Development of the University of Chicago.

Hollingshead's fundamental hypothesis, formed after an initial period of field work, was that "the social behavior of adolescents is functionally related to the position their families occupy in the community's social structure."<sup>22</sup> This social structure was perceived, on the basis of empirical observation, as a series of prestige groups arranged in hierarchical order:

As similar material was accumulated, it became evident that Elmtowners think of themselves as members of classes and that they act in part toward one another on the basis of their judgments about each other's class position. Persons who possess a cluster of similar values tend to be grouped into more or less common prestige positions.

<sup>21</sup> August B. Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949); see also "Selected Characteristics of Classes in a Middle Western Community," *American Sociological Review*, XII (Aug., 1947), 385-95.

<sup>22</sup> *Elmtown's Youth*, p. 1.



Persons with other values and correlated traits are assigned other levels or "pegs."<sup>23</sup>

A rating procedure was then devised and used by Hollingshead to stratify the 535 families of the adolescents studied into prestige groups, or "classes." Briefly, the following procedure was used: The names of thirty families, selected by the researcher on the basis of preliminary interviews as representing a cross-section of the community and as being well-known, were given to twenty-five residents to rate into an unspecified number of prestige groups. Nineteen, or 76 per cent, of the raters rated them into five groups or strata. This modal number was then taken to represent the prestige structure of the community. Twenty of the original thirty families were rated very consistently into the same strata. These twenty families, divided into five classes, were taken as a "control list." After further test validation of this list, it was given to a new set of thirty-one raters (adults who had lived in the community twenty years or more) representing a cross-section of the prestige structure of the community. These raters were asked to place each of the 535 families whom they knew with the family on the control list which it most closely approximated. (The prestige structure of the control list was not disclosed to the raters.) The five classes, in descending order of status, were given numerical values of Class I-1, Class II-2, Class III-3, etc., and equal class intervals were set up. The mean score for each family, based on its particular rankings—or, rather, equation with family whose class level was known—placed it in the appropriate class. In this way, nearly all of the 535 families were placed in one or another of the five prestige groups, or "classes." In thirty-nine cases where the raters were confused by differential social mobility within the family, Hollingshead exercised "clinical judgment" and performed the rating himself on the basis of the available evidence. The number of ratings for each family varied from seven to twenty-two (out of a possible total of thirty-one). Average deviations on individual families ranged from 0.00 to 1.12. Average deviations from the mean of all families in a particular class ranged from 0.04 for Class I to 0.47 for Class IV.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

Hollingshead's analysis of the reasons given by community residents in the early interviews for particular status assignments resulted in the following classification of criteria: (a) the way a family lived, including place of residence, dwelling type, and furniture; (b) income and material possessions; (c) participation in community affairs; (d) family background, which included ancestry, kin, and national origin; and (e) "reputation or prestige." Since the total ranking process is based on prestige, or status, the distinctiveness of item (e) is not apparent.

As background material to the more intensive analysis of the adolescents and their reactions, Hollingshead delineates the cultural patterns associated with the adults in each class. This is done by the presentation of cross tabulations (existence of association demonstrated by chi-square; degree of association by coefficient of contingency), differences in measures of central tendency and range (as, for instance, for income), and by descriptive statements (implicitly, but not explicitly, quantitative). Differences in ecological area of residence, occupation, income, house type, community leadership and power, ethnic derivation, age at marriage, family size, church affiliation, educational level, divorce and desertion, leisure-time activities, and many other characteristics, are shown. Differences among classes are quantitatively different in degree rather than mutually exclusive. Hollingshead declares that "each of the five strata . . . has a distinct sub-culture."<sup>24</sup> He thus appears to consider the classes as "group," or substantive, entities. This is indicated, also, by the statement (made in reference to the relation of Class IV to Classes III and V) that "Intimate association in cliques is limited almost exclusively to intra-class relationships."<sup>25</sup>

The bulk of the Hollingshead material deals with the impact of the class structure on the lives of the then current generation of adolescents in "Elmtown," 390 in high school, and 345 who had withdrawn from school. Relationships between class level and behavior are presented quantitatively by use of the techniques noted above. Significant differences (at the .01 level) by class background are shown. Ample case-history material is offered

<sup>24</sup> "Selected Characteristics of Classes in a Middle Western Community," p. 395.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 393.

to supplement and illustrate the quantitative data presented in the tables. The study covers nearly all aspects of adolescent behavior including school performance, extracurricular activity, clique and dating patterns, religious activity, jobs, recreation, and sex, and also delineates the reactions of teachers, administrators, employers, and the community in general to the adolescents on the basis of the latter's class background. In area after area it is shown that the chances for successful adjustment to the dominant values and rewards of the community vary positively with position in the class structure. It is demonstrated that there are several basic reasons for this. First, children coming from lower class homes learn, in their family and clique situations, behavior patterns which fit them poorly for successful educational and occupational adjustment. Secondly, many adults with authority in the community, such as teachers, administrators, and community leaders, influenced by their own class values, systematically discriminate against children of the lower classes. A third major point of interest brought out in the Hollingshead data is that the social structure of the adult world is virtually duplicated in the adolescent world, so that adolescent cliques and institutional activities tend to be class-typed, and the lower class children are subject to powerful discriminatory behavior from the adolescents of the higher classes. It is shown that these factors prove well-nigh irresistible in their cumulative effect, thus reducing social mobility to a minimum, and starting most lower-class adolescents in the community on a life pattern which will in all likelihood substantially parallel the lower-class pattern of their parents.

Kaufman's study<sup>26</sup> deals with a rural community consisting of a village and surrounding farm area in central New York State with a population of about twelve hundred. Data were obtained by formal and informal interviews and by participant observation during 1940 and 1941.

Kaufman selected fourteen residents of the community, who

<sup>26</sup> Harold F. Kaufman, *Prestige Classes in a New York Rural Community* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Memoir 260, March, 1944); "Defining Prestige Rank in a Rural Community," *Sociometry*, VIII (May, 1945), 199-207; and "Members of a Rural Community as Judges of Prestige Rank," *Sociometry*, IX (Feb., 1946), 71-85.

were asked to rate as many of the 455 family units as they knew well on the basis of their status or prestige. He carefully avoided suggesting to them any criteria for such rating, but asked them to rank people in terms of well-understood folk expressions which denoted prestige ("what people thought of them," "their standing in the community," etc.). Apparently no instructions were given for the number of classes to be used: the number of classes chosen by respective raters varied from four to ten. The distribution of raters by number of classes used follows:<sup>27</sup>

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<i>Number of Raters</i>	<i>Number of Classes Used</i>
2 .....	4
2 .....	5
6 .....	6
2 .....	7
1 .....	9
1 .....	10
<hr/>	
Total 14	

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While Kaufman's description of the next step is not entirely clear, it appears that he himself then distributed these ratings into eleven classes from 1 (highest class) and 1.5 (next highest class) through 5.5 and 6, with corresponding class intervals, by assigning to these intervals "the mean values of the distributions of persons rated."<sup>28</sup> Exactly how these means of rankings made on differently calibrated scales were computed and adjusted to an eleven point scale is not specified.

Highly deviant ratings were omitted but no more than one rating was discarded for a given individual rated. It was found that two raters were responsible for more than one-half of the extremely deviant ratings, and the ratings of these two judges were discarded altogether in assigning final rank. Kaufman assigned his own ratings to sixty-four individuals who had been rated by less than four of the judges and to thirty persons who "had a prestige rating different from that of the head of the fam-

<sup>27</sup> Compiled from data in Table 1, "Members of a Rural Community as Judges of Prestige Rank," p. 73.

<sup>28</sup> *Prestige Classes in a New York Rural Community*, p. 7.



ily"<sup>29</sup> (apparently in Kaufman's judgment). The fourteen judges themselves were drawn to represent various "prestige classes," and ethnic, age, sex, and residential groups, but the higher prestige classes were overrepresented on the "hypothesis that upper prestige-class persons have proportionately greater influence in determining the class system than have individuals of lower prestige."<sup>30</sup> The coefficient of correlation of each of eleven of the judges with the composite ratings was  $+ .74$  or above. On the basis of conversations with the judges during the rating process, Kaufman declares that they used ten major types of status, or status factors, as criteria: economic, occupational, ethnic, ideological, organizational, family (or sex) mores, alcoholic liquor mores, personality characteristics, clique status, and kinship status.

Kaufman then goes on to show the relationship of "membership" in these eleven prestige classes to general social characteristics (ethnic group, occupation, level of consumption, etc.), informal association, organizational participation, attitudes on selected social questions, and certain personality characteristics. These relationships are presented quantitatively by means of either correlation coefficients or cross tabulations. In many of these tables, prestige classes are combined, *viz.* 1-2, 2.5 and 3, 3.5, 4-6, or other combinations. In general, prestige class membership is shown to be significantly related to differences (quantitatively variable in degree, rather than mutually exclusive) in the above-mentioned "variables." It is demonstrated that intimate friendships between families are highly restricted in prestige class range. Kaufman makes it clear, however, that he does not regard his prestige classes as distinct groups or entities. The number of classes, he declares, is to be regarded as elastic and changeable, dependent primarily on the degree of prediction which can be obtained for any given variable, and secondly on ease and simplicity of classification.

Duncan and Artis have reported on a study of social stratification in a Pennsylvania rural community<sup>31</sup> consisting of a village

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Otis Dudley Duncan and Jay W. Artis, *Social Stratification in a Pennsylvania Rural Community*, Pennsylvania State College, School of Agriculture, Bulletin 543, Oct., 1951; "Some Problems of Stratification Research," *Rural Sociology*, XVI (March, 1951), 17-29.

center and surrounding farm area with a population of about twenty-one hundred. Some of the residents were employed as industrial workers in nearby towns. The study was carried out in 1949 by means of interview schedules taken on virtually a complete enumeration of the over five hundred households.

The authors are not committed to any one stratification technique, but stratify the population by eight different methods, studying the interrelationships among these various methods and, substantively, the respective correlations of these various types of social stratification with several indices of social participation in the organizations and activities of the community. Two types of community rating for prestige are used. Since the interests of the researchers in the study are primarily in its stratification aspects, a considerable amount of rich quantitative data on interrelationships of stratification variables is provided.

The eight stratification techniques may be classified in the following manner. Five are objective indices: occupation (a modification of the Census Bureau classification, occasionally collapsed into three categories: white collar, farmer, and blue collar); income; education; the holding of public office; and the Sewell socio-economic status scale (short form). One is a subjective self-identification by respondents as to class membership, with four forced-choice categories: upper class, middle class, working class, and lower class. The remaining two are status ratings of other community residents made by informants. These are called "community prestige score" and "judges' prestige ratings," and will now be described in some detail.

*Community prestige score.* Each of 443 household heads or wives of household heads was asked the question: "Thinking of all the families in this community, and of their general standing in this community, will you name several families who you think have higher standing than yours." The question was repeated for "lower standing" and "about the same standing." In effect, then, each respondent was asked to rate a self-selected array of families on a three-point scale, with his own status as the mid-point. Thus, in a conceptual sense, each family in the community

either was rated by each of the respondents on this three-point scale or was not rated at all by a particular informant. Duncan and Artis convert these four possibilities into a four-point scale, arbitrarily calibrated and weighted as follows:

mentioned as higher.....	+1
mentioned as same.....	+ 1/2
not mentioned.....	0
mentioned as lower.....	-1

The community prestige score for each household was computed by summing the score credits which it had received, multiplying the result by two, and adding a constant of thirty (the last two operations constitute a transformation to avoid negative numbers and fractions). These scores are treated as quantitative measures varying along an unbroken continuum and are not classified, except arbitrarily for the purpose of showing statistical relationships.

The effectiveness of the scale is considerably vitiated, as the authors are careful to point out, by insufficiency of response. One hundred and seven of the 443 informants refused to give any names at all. Three hundred and two gave answers for "same standing." Only 51 per cent supplied names for "higher standing," and for "lower standing" the figure is only 29 per cent. With the total number of households in the community as a base, 30 percent were not mentioned by any respondents in any category of standing. Of the total number of mentions, only 13 per cent were for lower standing. It is thus obvious that (a) many respondents were reluctant to differentiate on a scale of the type presented, and (b) respondents were particularly reluctant to place other families in a lower category.

*Judges' prestige ratings:* Duncan and Artis used a judges' rating technique similar in some ways to the Hollingshead method in that it was based on a criterion group or "control list." However, it differs from the Hollingshead method in an important respect, to be specified below. Five judges were selected from among community residents to do the ratings. These judges were all above the mean of community prestige, and the authors de-

fend this selection as unavoidable in terms of the requirements of the task: wide knowledge of the community and cordiality to the study.

Each judge was given a list of fifteen names of families in the community, representing a wide distribution on the community prestige score and having been identified by the interviews as being more widely known than the average. The judges were requested to rank these fifteen names in order of their "general standing" in the community, no specific criteria of prestige being suggested. These fifteen families served as the criterion group. Though Duncan and Artis do not specifically engage this point, it would appear that the judges were *expected* to rate all fifteen families as having *different* prestige, thus in effect presenting a forced choice scale with fifteen categories. In other words, they were apparently not given the opportunity to rate some families as being approximately together in a general status category, should they wish to, nor given a sample large enough to suggest this possibility. Herein lies the most important difference from the Hollingshead method. Rank order correlation coefficients for each judge against the average rating for all judges ranged from .83 to .91.

Next, a stratified random sample of 115 families was taken from the total community list and given to the judges with instructions to match each family with the one in the criterion group of fifteen which it most closely approximated in rank. Since there were marked diversities in the distributions of the 115 families along each judge's fifteen-point scale, the ranks were transferred to percentile values for each judge. The final composite score for each rated household was then computed by averaging the percentile scores it received from each judge's ranking. The reliability of the rating procedure was found to be of the order of .7.

*Community criteria of prestige.* In the interviews from which the community prestige scores were derived, respondents were asked to give their reasons for naming the particular families to higher or lower standing. Even when they gave no names they were asked to indicate the *kind* of people they regarded as having



higher or lower status. Thus, a body of data on the criteria used by members of the community for ranking people accumulated. Duncan and Artis codified and quantified these data respectively for "higher" and "lower" standing and emerged with some interesting results.

For higher standing, slightly over half of the respondents who replied mentioned factors falling within the "money, wealth, high material level of living" category. Approximately one-sixth to one-fifth mentioned "activity and leadership," "religious worthiness," "morality," and "education." No other category was listed by as many as one-tenth of the respondents. For lower standing three criteria were mentioned with considerable frequency. Not quite half listed "irresponsibility," and nearly as many, "immorality." About one-fourth mentioned "poverty, poor material level of living." The other mentions were well scattered.<sup>32</sup> There was a significant association between the naming of a criterion for higher standing and its contrary for lower standing, suggesting, as the authors point out, that a given person was using a rough but consistent scale in prestige rating. Other than the paired opposites, the associations between major criteria used for higher and for lower standing were generally only slight when positive or else were negative. In other words, a respondent who used material wealth as a criterion for higher standing was not likely to use religious behavior as a criterion for lower standing.

*Other findings.* Some of the other findings of the study can only be summarized here. With the exception of self-identification as to class, all the indices of stratification correlated substantially and positively with each other. Occupation and socio-economic status together accounted for a large portion of the variance in prestige as measured by judges' ratings. Social participation, as measured by several indices, was positively related to most of the stratification variables. Visiting relationships between families tended to involve households of similar socio-economic status, but the visiting pattern itself was much more characteristic of the upper portion of the stratification structure of the com-

<sup>32</sup> For the complete tabular analysis of these data, see Tables 7 and 8, *Social Stratification in a Pennsylvania Rural Community*, pp. 13-14.

munity than the lower. Of the seven most useful of the indices of stratification studied, the one which was most highly correlated with social participation was the socio-economic status scale. Most of the relationships between stratification indices and types of social participation revealed no clean "breaks" in the dependent variable but rather graduated changes, thus indicating a lack of discreteness for any of the groupings on the stratification variable.<sup>33</sup> The last point constitutes, of course, an empirical argument against the "substantive" view of social classes.

Schuler used the community-rating technique in a study of a small Louisiana village and farm community (total population not specified, but village population given as "less than 1000"; date of study appears to be late 1930's).<sup>34</sup> One hundred and one families were rated; these constituted "fairly complete coverage of the white farm families within a radius of five to eight miles from the trade center" and "about half of the [white] non-farm families."<sup>35</sup>

The raters, or judges, were nine residents; "most" of them were not included in the list to be rated, but Schuler rates them informally himself as "high-class." These were asked to rate the members of the sample into three classes on the basis of "general reputation and standing in the community." Numerical values were arbitrarily assigned as follows: 1 for "high-class," 3 for "middle-class," and 5 for "low-class." Poor raters were ascertained on the basis of the percentage of the rater's ratings which stood alone. One rater was eliminated by this method. Schuler further found that newer residents and older residents rated consistently differently. He rejected the ratings of the newer residents, which left him with the ratings of five judges. The "social status score" of each family was then the mean of scores received from three or more of these five raters. Only ninety-two out of the 101 families were scored since the remainder received less than three ratings. It should be noted that in the ratings of the original nine judges, 34 per cent of the families received ratings

<sup>33</sup> See "Some Problems of Stratification Research," pp. 18-25.

<sup>34</sup> Edgar A. Schuler, "Social and Economic Status in a Louisiana Hills Community," *Rural Sociology*, V (March, 1940), 69-83.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

of both high and low class. This percentage dropped to 2 per cent in the ratings of the "5 best" judges.

Schuler's subsequent analysis showing relationships between social-status score and selected social and economic characteristics is based primarily on a comparison of two small groups of families: the eight highest and eight lowest farm families in the status scale. Differences are demonstrated largely through means and cross tabulation. Tests of significance are not used. The differential characteristics include type of farm tenure, horizontal mobility, education, publications received, acreage owned, attitudes toward relief, and other items. Schuler also notes a close relationship in status score between families who named other families in visiting relationships and those whom they named.

The technique of assigning status by means of ratings made by community judges<sup>36</sup> is a method which, when fully specified, has a number of scientific virtues. It is objective (in terms of its stated goal—the ascertainment of the status structure as determined by subjective judgments made by community residents), communicable, and verifiable, and its limits of accuracy and reliability can be estimated from the data provided. However, the details of its application raise several important questions, some of which have been discussed earlier in connection with the Warner school, others of which will recur in later chapters. We shall deal with them in the present context as succinctly as possible.

Within the small community context, how many raters should be used and how should they be distributed throughout the prestige structure itself? With regard to the first half of this question, there is probably no uniquely valid answer. Small communities themselves differ in size; we note that Duncan and Artis used only five raters in their Judges' Prestige Ratings for a community of twenty-one hundred, while Hollingshead used thirty-one raters in the final step of his rating procedure for a com-

<sup>36</sup> For other studies carried out by this method, see Gerhard E. Lenski, "American Social Classes: Statistical Strata or Social Groups?" *American Journal of Sociology*, LVIII (Sept., 1952), 139-44; John Useem, Pierre Tangent, and Ruth Useem, "Stratification in a Prairie Town," *American Sociological Review*, VII (June, 1942), 331-42; and Wayne Wheeler, *Social Stratification in a Plains Community* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: privately printed, 1949).

munity of ten thousand. The larger the number of raters, the greater the confidence one will have that the ratings reflect community-wide judgment, and the greater the possibility that each name in the sample will receive an adequate number of ratings. On the other hand, parsimony of research effort is a limiting consideration. Possibly ten raters should be considered a desirable minimum even for the smaller communities. Judging from the Duncan and Artis experience with the Community Prestige Score, an attempt to secure ratings from a complete enumeration of community residents is not likely to be very successful, particularly if the respondents are asked to rate in relation to their own status position.

The question of the desirable distribution of raters in the prestige structure demands consideration of a number of factors. We note that in three out of the four studies reviewed here the lower portion of the status structure was either underrepresented or not represented at all in the panel of judges. Kaufman concludes that the least accurate of his judges were likely to be from the lower or lower middle prestige classes, and Duncan and Artis found themselves unable to secure lower-status judges in whose status rankings they would have had confidence. But, to some extent, this simply begs the question. Status rankings of lower-status persons may differ somewhat from those of higher-status people as is suggested by the above considerations and by an experimental study carried out by Lundberg.<sup>37</sup> But unless a researcher limits his claims to a study of the status structure *as seen by middle and upper status informants*, the inclusion of lower-status raters is logically demanded. One might then, of course, raise the question of how meaningful an averaging of widely deviant status ratings actually is. Our recommendations on the matter are twofold: (a) further research in a variety of small community settings to find out just how widely and in what ways status ratings made by upper- and lower-status informants actually

<sup>37</sup> Lundberg compares the respective ratings on "relative socio-economic status" or "how comfortably people live in their homes and in their community" made by a janitor, a banker, and the Chapin social status scale, of residents of a small New England village. He found that the janitor's ratings and the banker's ratings differed more between themselves than did either with the Chapin scale. See George A. Lundberg, "The Measurement of Socio-economic Status," *American Sociological Review*, V (Feb., 1940), 29-39.



do differ; (b) a conceptualization of the community status structure as follows—that it is a *composite* or *mosaic* whose outlines in the top half or so of its structure are determined most accurately by persons who function at that status, and whose outlines at the bottom portion of the structure are similarly most accurately determined by those who are themselves in that portion, while the status division between the two halves (the particular fraction is heuristic) is recognized by all. Such a concept can be tentatively justified on the basis of the finding of the *Deep South* research, noted earlier, that persons at each particular status level were able to make finer class distinctions at that level than persons from another level. Hollingshead notes that generally greater agreement among raters was found where raters and rated were close together in status level.<sup>38</sup> On the basis of the suggested conceptualization, members of the sample rated would be status typed in rough and preliminary fashion by use of some objective index such as occupation (in view of the strong association between objective and prestige indices) and then the judges' ratings would be *differentially weighted* in terms of the association of the judge's status with the preliminary status of the family or persons being rated.

A second major question is what instructions should be given to raters with regard to the number of prestige levels to be used. The two basic alternatives are a forced choice where the raters are asked to rate a group of names into a specified number of categories, and an open choice where the raters are free to choose their own number of categories. Here there is no question that the open-choice method is preferable. From a logical point of view the forced-choice method is based, paradoxically, on one or the other of two conflicting assumptions: (a) that there are substantive status levels and that the researcher knows how many of these levels there are in advance; or (b) that there are no substantive status levels, only individual differences in status, and that therefore the number of classes for rater sorting can be chosen arbitrarily simply for the methodological purpose of allowing for conversion into an individual status score. Neither of these assumptions is warranted in advance of study of the particular com-

<sup>38</sup> See *Elmtown's Youth*, pp. 39-40.

munity. Thus the open-choice method is the only one which does not prejudice this important question and which provides for the possibility of an empirical answer.

Those researchers who favor the viewpoint that the number of status classes is arbitrary and flexible, indicating a status continuum, point to the ability of their raters to make increasingly fine distinctions in prestige on demand. For instance, Lenski (who used the open-choice technique), in a prestige rating study of a Connecticut community, states that "several raters *volunteered* the information that they could subdivide the families in the study group almost indefinitely."<sup>39</sup> And Kaufman declares that "several of the judges who possessed a keen sense of prestige distinctions probably could have ranked the community population in more than eleven prestige classes had they been requested to do so."<sup>40</sup>

While such evidence is important it does not *exclude the possibility that larger social psychological constructs of status levels exist in the minds of community informants along with finer prestige distinctions within each larger construct*. Such a hypothesis suggests that the traditional technique of providing prestige judges with a minimum of structuring in initial directions needs to be replaced by or at least supplemented with depth interviews which *begin* with a minimum of structuring so that this level of response can be preserved, but progress to probe for the exact details and ramifications of the status construct as it exists in the minds of community residents. It is possible that projective techniques, which have been used so successfully in studies of ethnic prejudice, could be helpful in this connection. At the very minimum, there could certainly be no valid objection to depth interviews carried out on judges after the rating process has been performed. Our point is that at the present time we simply do not know enough about the complexities of the status construct as it operates in the minds of residents of American communities. And we shall not increase this knowledge if we are so fearful of implanting ideas in respondents that we refrain from asking questions.

<sup>39</sup> Lenski, "American Social Classes: Statistical Strata or Social Groups?" p. 143.

<sup>40</sup> Kaufman, *Prestige Classes in a New York Rural Community*, p. 39.

With regard to the question of the relative merits of the "control list" method of rating, as developed by Hollingshead, and the direct method, an answer will be more readily forthcoming if we break the rating process into its conceptual elements. Essentially, raters are performing two operations when they began to sort the cards. They are (a) determining how many prestige levels there are in the community or, if they sort indefinitely, indicating that there is only a prestige continuum—that is, they are determining the status configuration of the community; and (b) they are determining what families or individuals belong on each level or at each position on the continuum. The control-list method, in effect, assumes that once the first operation is performed, and a part of the second—that is, once a series of representative families has been assigned to each level or position—the remainder of the operation may take place by comparing families. Provided that the first process has been carried out within acceptable limits of validity and reliability, the assumption is entirely justified. And there is doubtless research economy to the procedure from the point of view of the intellectual demands on judges who are asked to rate as many as seventy-five or a hundred families. For communities which are small enough for the rating technique to be used at all, but which yet require large numbers of ratings, the control-list technique would seem to offer some advantages.

A final question, which needs only brief consideration here, concerns the application of the community rating method to large cities and metropolitan areas. Obviously, the rating of *particular families* by resident judges is a technique which cannot be used meaningfully in larger communities, except possibly at the Social Register level, since so few families are known in common. However, it might be well worth while to explore the problem of how the *status configuration* of the larger community looks in general fashion to its residents by use of a panel of judges selected to represent a wide diversity of economic position, occupation, ethnic background, and years of residence. As noted above, interviews for this objective should be of the "depth" variety and should be prepared to elicit a large amount of exploratory qualitative data which could then be analyzed and codified for the ascertainment of patterns of similarity and differ-

ence in views of the status structure. More standardized instruments for analysis of this phenomenon might then develop from this exploratory work.

### Studies of the Occupation or Income Type

In this group fall studies by Mills, Anderson, and Goldschmidt.

Mills's study<sup>41</sup> deals principally with a Midwestern city of sixty thousand population selected as typical of the "middlesized" city of that region. Its focus is on the middle classes as therein defined, but some attention is given to other classes for comparative purposes. The time of the study is 1945. "Objective" class position is defined as resting on property, occupational, and income factors, while "subjective" stratification may be carried out by various types of ratings. Mills asserts that properly designed stratification researches will use both methods and study the discrepancies which appear.

The key ascertainment paragraph reads as follows:<sup>42</sup>

When the occupations of a cross section of married men in Central City are coded in 24 groups and ranked according to average family income, five strata are crystallized out: between each of them there is a "natural" break in average income whereas the average income of the occupations making up each income stratum are relatively homogeneous. These strata, with their average weekly income. . . , are as follows:

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| (1) Big Business and Executives.....           | \$137.00 |
| (2) Small Business and Free Professionals..... | 102.00   |
| (3) Higher White-Collar.....                   | 83.00    |
| (4) Lower White-Collar.....                    | 72.00    |
| (5) Wage Workers.....                          | 59.00    |

"Objectively," Mills declares, Strata 1 and 2 fall into the "old middle classes" and Strata 3 and 4 into the "new middle classes." However, later he seems to equate Stratum 1 with the "upper class" and to consider Strata 2, 3, and 4 as constituting the "mid-

<sup>41</sup> C. Wright Mills, "The Middle Classes in Middle-Sized Cities," *American Sociological Review*, XI (Oct., 1946), 520-29.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 521.



dle classes." There is some ambiguity about his placement of the free professionals in his definitional scheme. Wage earners are identified as "lower class." The income ranges, as well as the means, of Strata 3 and 4 are given, and no overlapping appears between the two strata. Whether this lack of overlapping extends to all stratum relationships is not indicated. Average deviations in income from the stratum mean are not presented. The distinction between "Big Business" and "Small Business" is that the latter type employs fewer than one hundred workers (in this sample, they employ "on the average 2 to 4"). "Higher White-Collar" is made up of salaried professionals and semiprofessionals, salesmen, government officials, and minor managerial employees; "Lower White-Collar" is made up of government protection and service personnel, clerks, stenographers, bookkeepers, and foremen.

Further description of the five strata is based on interviews within each group conducted both in Central City and "six other middle-sized cities." The combined total of interviews appears to be approximately 350, but the exact number cannot be extracted from the data given. Principal emphasis is placed on an analysis of the small business and white collar groups with regard to their social history and origins, prestige, political consciousness, and power in the community, compared with other groups. One finding is that small businessmen and free professionals, though they are in the same income bracket, have different social characteristics and backgrounds: in occupational derivation, intermarriage patterns, and job histories, the free professionals tended to approximate the big business owners and executives whereas "the small business men are of the generally upper ranks only in income; in terms of occupational origin, intermarriage, job history, and education, more of them than of any other occupational group of such high income are 'lower class.'"<sup>43</sup> On the basis of his sample, Mills found that the prestige positions of the small business and white collar people in the community were ambiguous: the upper class tended to downgrade them, while the lower classes grouped the small businessmen with the business class generally, thus upgrading them, while their attitude towards the

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 523.

white-collar classes was mixed. With regard to ideology and power, Mills concludes that the small business and white-collar people are dominated by "big business" influence, tend to identify themselves with the business world as such, and have no independent political consciousness and no power of their own. The lower white-collar group might swing towards labor, in a particular city, he states, but only if labor has already secured civic power and prestige. In any event, it generates no direction of its own.

Anderson's *We Americans*<sup>44</sup> is a full-scale community study of Burlington, Vermont (population approximately twenty-five thousand) carried out in the early thirties. It is a "study of cleavage in an American city"—primarily ethnic group cleavages, but with a stated focus, also, on the interrelationships of the latter with socio-economic stratification. Data were obtained by informal interviews with community leaders, a demographic census of families, surveys of organizational records, newspapers, etc., and by formal interviews (using a standard schedule) with 459 persons, constituting a cross-section sample of the community with respect to ethnic groups, socio-economic classes, and generations. Much of the data presented quantitatively is based on this sample. Criteria of statistical significance are not used. Characterizations of life in the community are made both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The ethnic groups in the community include the "Yankees" or "Old Americans," the French-Canadians, the Irish, the Jews, and several others of smaller size. Three-fifths of the community's residents are Catholic. Anderson's socio-economic stratification is an occupational one; she distinguishes three main groups—a working class, a business class, and a professional class—with an implication of an ascending order of status. The working class is largely made up of newer ethnics, particularly the French-Canadians; the business class has substantial representation from many groups, and the professional class is dominated by Old Americans.

Anderson's survey presents a rather informative picture of the relationship of class to ethnic group. Its general substance is that the ethnic cleavages are so powerful that close social contacts are

<sup>44</sup> Elin L. Anderson, *We Americans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938).

not often formed even by members of the same class, if ethnic lines must be crossed. For instance, in describing ecological distribution, she points out that

... economic status is the most important single factor in determining choice of residence; people of each ethnic group are to be found in all wards, from the poorest to the finest residential sections; but within an area of comparable economic land and rent values, there is a tendency for neighborhoods to form along ethnic lines.<sup>45</sup>

Eighty-seven per cent of her Old American sample and 74 per cent of her Jewish sample stated that they had no intimate friends outside their respective ethnic group. Even among the Irish group, whose answer to this question indicated more crossing of group lines, Anderson states:

Certainly there is a leading social set among the Irish as there is among the Old Americans. At times they join with members of the Old American group, but this is almost always at large impersonal bridge parties, teas, or other similar functions. The more personal social life of each is behind the walls of its own group.<sup>46</sup>

Anderson's original distinction between the business and professional classes is not systematically adhered to; often she groups them together in contradistinction to the lower class. At one point she distinguishes between a higher and lower economic level within the business class, but no further use is made of this distinction. The study's major defect in the delineation of ethnic-class relationships is that samples are not systematically set up on a combination of ethnic and class factors; viz., Old American middle class, Irish upper class, French-Canadian lower class, French-Canadian middle class, etc., and information presented in terms of these units. If this had been done, a more precise picture could have been secured of relationships of class groups to each other *within* each ethnic group, and of the possible differentials in relationships *across* ethnic lines by class.

Goldschmidt's study of the town of Wasco, California, and its surrounding farm area<sup>47</sup> was carried out as an empirical investi-

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>47</sup> Walter Goldschmidt, *As You Sow* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1947).

gation of the author's hypothesis that industrialized farming produces urban institutions and social structure in the rural community. The Wasco community, with a total population of about eight thousand, rests on an agricultural base of intense crop production and specialization on high-priced irrigated land, virtually eliminating production for home use and requiring the use of extensive power equipment and large numbers of seasonal farm laborers. Such a rural economy stands in sharp contrast to the traditional family farm type of operation and results, in Goldschmidt's demonstration, in the replacement of rural *Gemeinschaft* values with an impersonal system of evaluation and social relationships based on pecuniary criteria. The structural concomitant of this transformation is the development of a social class system similar to that found in the urban community. While the Wasco community receives primary attention in the research, two other nearby communities varying in their degree of rural industrialization were also studied for comparison and further confirmation of his generalization and are included in the report. We shall confine our attention here to Wasco. The study of this community was carried out during an eight-month period in 1940 and 1941 by means of the participant observer technique, interviews, and analysis of available statistical data.

In Goldschmidt's conceptual scheme, social classes are status groups which are based squarely on the interrelated constellation of occupation, wealth and income, and material possessions. The "core" of these items is stated to be money; occupation is the means of acquiring it, and possessions represent its use. Since data on wealth, income, and expenditures are hard to come by, however, he declares that occupation is most effectively used as the criterion of social class position. Accordingly, he groups the population by means of an adaptation of the Alba Edwards census classification of occupations as follows: A—Professionals, Managers, and Proprietors; B—Farm Operators; C—Clerical Workers; D—Skilled Labor (including semiskilled); E—Unskilled Labor; F—Nonemployed (housewives, unemployed, unknown occupations). Groups A, C, D, and E he considers to represent "a descending scale of social worth, though with exceptions" in the community, while "farmers show variation in social status from



A to D, but for the most part fall between A and C."<sup>48</sup> He further states that these occupational distinctions "only imperfectly reflect the social classes and status levels to be defined;"<sup>49</sup> nevertheless, this occupational classification constitutes the foundation of his ascertainment procedure.

On the above basis, two major "social classes" in the community are distinguished. The upper class consists of businessmen, professionals, farm operators, white-collar workers, and skilled (and some semiskilled) laborers (Groups A to D). The lower class is made up of the agricultural laborers, both regularly employed and seasonal, and other unskilled workers in the community (Group E). This class also apparently includes some semi-skilled laborers, and those storekeepers and others who serve only the lower group. The miscellaneous Group F, in the previous classification, is not further dealt with. While Goldschmidt uses the designations "upper" and "lower" for these classes, he states a preference for the terms "nuclear group" (the upper class) and "outsiders" (the lower class) as reflecting both the historical and current dynamics of the situation. The "nuclear group," or upper class, grew up with the town and dominates its institutions. The "outsiders" are made up of the various groups which arrived later to serve as agricultural laborers. They have not been accepted into the main stream of community life and are largely on the outside of community concern except in their symbiotic function of providing cheap agricultural labor at the appropriate seasons of the year. Thus their relationship to the dominant class, especially the farmers, is one not only of status difference, but also of sharp economic conflict centering on the issues of wages and working conditions in a highly competitive cash crop agricultural economy.

While the division between the nuclear group and the outsiders is declared to be the major social class division, each of these groups is in turn subdivided into status levels. These subcategories are not considered to be as decisive or as explicitly recognized as the class divisions, and the subdivision is said to be simply "a conceptual device for dividing a continuum of variation into

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>49</sup> *Loc. cit.*

broad categories," but it is "of real value in helping to understand the social relationships, and in describing the nature of social life in the community."<sup>50</sup>

The nuclear group, or upper class, has three status levels. The "elite" is made up of corporation executives (mostly in branch offices of large corporations), doctors, some local businessmen of long residence, and the wealthier farm operators. The very highest of these orient their social relationships and status strivings to a wider area than the town itself. The "middle group" is composed of most of the local businessmen, operators of farms from eighty to two hundred acres in size, school teachers, salesmen and other lower corporation personnel, most skilled laborers, and some long-resident semiskilled workers. The "marginal group" embraces mechanics, farmers with small acreage, clerks in small stores, filling-station attendants, and similar personnel. Many of them are described as former outsiders who have entered the nuclear group through length of residence and permanent employment.

The "outsiders," or lower class, are split nonhierarchically into three ethnic categories: Negroes, Mexicans, and the native whites, most of the last group being migrants of relatively recent arrival in the community from the depressed agricultural areas of the American Southwest. These three groups do not mingle with each other, but are accorded "similar treatment" by the nuclear group. The native white workers are themselves divided in status; those that secure a regular farm laborer job which has some permanence are accorded higher status by the nuclear group, while the seasonal temporary workers have the lower status position and are stereotyped as shiftless and ne'er-do-well. This division is signified by the respective appellations, "dustbowlers" and "Okies," the latter used with a wider referent than state of origin. It is declared that status differentials also exist within the Negro and Mexican groups, but these were not made a part of the present research.

The bulk of the study consists of an analysis of the institutions, structures, and processes of Wasco community life, with particular reference to the major class divisions and, to some ex-

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

tent, to the internal status categories. Special attention is focused on the role of associations—civic, social, and religious—in the functioning of the community, and patterns of “cohesion, conflict, and control” in the interaction of the two classes. There is no systematic sampling of each class for interviewing purposes, but the occupational classification described above is used for breakdown of such enumerations as voting registration lists, a school survey, and membership lists of civic associations and churches. Interviews appear to have been used largely as a supplementary device to complement such tabulations where the data were needed, to secure case history and qualitative materials, and for special study of selected questions. Case histories of community decision and action illustrating the operation of power factors and the nature of controls are frequently given.

In general, the picture presented is one of domination of community life by the nuclear group, the virtual exclusion of the agricultural laboring class from the main currents of community decision and action, and lack of social contact and communication between the two classes. A particularly interesting aspect of the findings rests on the fact that the town of Wasco, at the time of the research, was unincorporated, thus excluding the opportunity for community-wide voting on most issues of civic interest. This placed even greater power in the hands of the most influential civic associations, which were entirely under the control of the nuclear group and which interpreted community interests in terms of the values of that group alone. Considerable attention is focused, also, on the role of leadership in the power conflict as it stemmed from outside the community itself, in the form of large corporations with interests in Wasco, nonlocal government agencies, and labor unions. Labor organizations, however, had not been particularly successful in the face of determined farmer and community opposition and the lack of militant class consciousness on the part of the agricultural laborers themselves, along with their orientation to the dominant social mobility values of the nuclear group.

Stratification of a community based on income or occupation makes the ascertainment process appear relatively clear-cut and

simple. Furthermore, if the income factor alone is used, the definition is reasonably clear-cut; one has taken the continuum of economic power (as measured by income) and arbitrarily broken it up into aggregates with more and less economic power. However, where the occupational aspect is used, as it is in all the studies considered above, a number of problems present themselves in connection with definition and, beneath the apparent simplicity, with ascertainment, as well.

If occupation is used alone, the question immediately arises whether the occupational classification is meant to be an index of one or more of the stratification dimensions—social status, economic power, or political power. If it is not, then the researcher is, in effect, not making a stratification study at all, but is simply studying the role of certain functional groups in the community. If, however, the goal is stratification analysis, then the adequacy of the occupational classification as an index of the particular stratification variable or variables specified must be carefully scrutinized. Basically, there are only two ways of validating such an index: (a) by empirically demonstrating a high degree of correlation between the occupational classification chosen and the stratification variable (for instance, social status) in the community itself; or (b) by using an occupational scale which has been validated in some other community or on a nationwide sample, and then theoretically justifying its application to the community under study.

If procedure (a) is followed, then care must be taken to arrive at an occupational classification or scale which squares with the stratification realities of the community and is not simply an awkward adaptation of some prior conception of the relationship between occupation and social status. For instance, in the Anderson study, the distinction between the professional class and the business class, with an implication of descending status, was not validated and did not appear to be particularly useful. What appears more likely was that proprietors of businesses in some size categories, some executives, and some professionals had highest status, and others of these occupational groups, along with other categories such as clerks, salesmen, and perhaps some skillful workers, were in a middle portion of the prestige hierarchy. At



any rate the question must be validated empirically and there must be a willingness to subclassify functional categories and overlap these categories where needed to give a valid description of the relationship of occupation to social status, or whatever stratification dimension is being used.

The difficulties involved in the use of broad occupational categories as a stratification device are further illustrated by the problem Goldschmidt had in applying his adaptation of the Edwards scale<sup>51</sup> to the Wasco community. Farmers were said to vary in status over four levels of the classification. In the subcategorization of the upper class or nuclear group into three status levels, the scale categories had to be broken up: some businessmen and some professionals were in the "elite" group, others were in the "middle group." Skilled workers overlapped the "middle" and the "marginal" groups. And even the major distinction between the upper class and the lower class could not be completely equated with breaks in the occupational categories since some *proprietors* of small stores which served lower-class personnel only were themselves included in the lower class.

The major problem presented by the attempt to use broad functional occupational categories as a stratification scale is that occupational function in the broad descriptive sense and social status or economic power do not usually coincide without overlapping. The proprietor of a corner grocery store and the owner of the city's largest department store are both "proprietors," but obviously both their social status and their economic power differ considerably. The doctor and the public-school teacher are both "professionals" but their income brackets are wide apart. The upshot of the matter is that any occupational classification which is to have even approximate usefulness for stratification research will have to be constructed on the basis of more than one dimension—that is, the functional classification must be subclassified by economic criteria and/or other criteria associated with status and power and larger categories overlapped where necessary. In the above group of studies, Mills faced this difficulty and met it by distinguishing, on the basis of income and scope of enterprise, be-

<sup>51</sup> For a full discussion of the Edwards scale as a stratification device, see chap. vii.

tween "big business" and "small business" and "higher white collar" and "lower white collar." The revised Warner scale for rating occupations, devised for the Index of Status Characteristics,<sup>52</sup> carries this principle out to the full. Here, on a seven-point scale, professionals are divided into three ranks, "proprietors and managers" into six, "clerical and kindred workers, etc." into five, and so on. It should be noted that this recommendation for a multidimensional occupation scale does not threaten the logic of our over-all insistence on the need to distinguish conceptually among the three major stratification dimensions. An occupational scale should logically be simply an instrumental device for measuring position on some *one* of these dimensions.

### Studies of Friendship or Visiting Patterns

Loomis and associates have recommended that studies of stratification be carried out through analysis of activities carried out by persons who regard themselves and are regarded as equals. They suggest that people of similar status in most cultures confine informal visiting relationships to people whom they consider to be congenial and who have similar social status. If this assumption is valid, they declare, then the existence of social classes with "core" personnel may be discovered by a sociometric analysis of such relationships, "breaking points" between the classes could be determined by statistical means, and the criteria of class could be secured through study of the correlating characteristics of the persons who make up such intervisiting groups.<sup>53</sup>

We have already noted that a number of community studies indicated a tendency towards confinement of intervisiting and clique relationships to people of comparable social status. For instance, Duncan and Artis found that, on the basis of a three-fold occupational classification—Blue Collar, Farmer, and White Collar—62 per cent of pair intervisiting relationships between households were homogeneous with respect to these categories, which may be compared with a figure of 37 per cent had such

<sup>52</sup> See *Social Class in America*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>53</sup> C. P. Loomis, J. A. Beegle, and T. W. Longmore, "Critique of Class as Related to Social Stratification," *Sociometry*, X (Nov., 1947), 319-37.

pairs been constituted at random.<sup>54</sup> Two community studies which are not primarily stratification studies, but which, as one feature of the research, investigated in some manner the relationship of friendship patterns to some objective stratification index, have been conducted by Lundberg and associates and by Loomis; these may profitably be reviewed here.

Lundberg's study<sup>55</sup> dealt with a small Vermont village in which 94 per cent of the families were successfully interviewed, the housewife being the most frequent respondent. The goal was to obtain information about the "attraction-patterns," or verbalized friendship relationships, to present these patterns in sociometric charts, and to study their relationship to other social and economic factors. The respondent was asked to name her best friends in the community. If she asked for further information as to the meaning of the term, she was told that what was desired was the names of people with whom "social visiting" most frequently took place. On the basis of the information obtained, Lundberg then grouped the families of the community into eight "constellations." Each constellation may be thought of as a group of families whose choices as "best friends" converged either directly or indirectly toward a "nucleus" (family or person) who was the recipient of a large number of choices. "Socio-economic status" of each family was determined by the Chapin scale, and the mean scores for each constellation or "chart" (from the pictorial representation) were computed. Results are summarized, in part, as follows:

. . . the mean scores for different charts vary from a minimum of 104 (Chart VIII) to a maximum of 161 (Chart VI), a significant difference. However, the standard deviations of all the means are large and indicate no narrow grouping on the basis of socio-economic status. The coefficients of variation range between 23% and 46%.<sup>56</sup>

Lundberg goes on to make larger groupings of the constellations and gives them class designations:

<sup>54</sup> "Some Problems of Stratification Research," p. 24.

<sup>55</sup> George A. Lundberg and Margaret Lawing, "The Sociology of Some Community Relations," *American Sociological Review*, II (June, 1937), 318-35; George A. Lundberg, "Social Attraction-Patterns in a Rural Village; A Preliminary Report," *Sociometry*, I (July-Oct., 1937), 77-80; George A. Lundberg and Mary Steele, "Social Attraction-Patterns in a Village," *Sociometry*, I (Jan.-April, 1938), 375-419.

<sup>56</sup> Lundberg and Steele, "Social Attraction-Patterns in a Village," p. 410.

In general we may say that Groups I, II and VI are definitely upper-class groups (mean score 157). Groups IV, V, and VII are middle class (mean score 136), and Groups III and VIII (especially as regards the peripheral group) are lower class (mean score 107) according to their socio-economic scores.<sup>57</sup>

Apart from Lundberg's principal purpose of demonstrating the patterns of "attraction" in the village, it should be noted that from one point of view this study contains a serious defect in stratification analysis. The make-up of the constellations is not restricted to *mutual* choices for friendships, but is determined primarily by the direction of one-way choices, in which the question of reciprocal choices is not paramount. They are not, therefore, groupings made up exclusively of families who actually visit each other frequently, or who *claim each other* as friends. If constellations of this latter type had been set up, it is possible that the differences in socio-economic status means for the constellations would have been greater, and the deviations within the constellation smaller.

The Loomis study<sup>58</sup> investigates the nature of social relationships and participation among families in seven rural resettlement projects sponsored by the federal government. These seven communities were scattered over various parts of the South and Southwest. As one item of the research, family heads were asked to rank other families in their community on the basis of the frequency of exchange of social visits. The interviewed family and its most frequent visiting family were set up in pairs, and correlation coefficients were then computed to measure the variation in identical characteristics between associating pairs of families. "Value of family living," defined elsewhere as "total value of all goods and services used for family-living purposes,"<sup>59</sup> showed a positive correlation of .358 for associating families in all proj-

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 411.

<sup>58</sup> Charles P. Loomis, *Social Relationships and Institutions in Seven New Rural Communities* (Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Agriculture, The Farm Security Administration and The Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Social Research Report No. XVIII, 1940).

<sup>59</sup> C. P. Loomis and Dwight M. Davidson, Jr., *Standards of Living of the Residents of Seven Rural Resettlement Communities* (Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Agriculture, The Farm Security Administration and The Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Social Research Report No. XI, 1938), p. 12.



ects. In assessing the import of this figure, Loomis's warning remark should be kept in mind that distance between homes was very important at the time of the study and may have discounted the influence of some factors.

In both the Lundberg and Loomis studies, the socioeconomic or economic rating is a point on an undivided continuum. This raises an important consideration for the problem of measurement of the relationship of a rating score with friendship or social visiting. It is possible that selection of intimate friends is performed, with respect to the social or economic criterion, *within a certain range* of positions, rather than on the basis of perfect matching of such positions. This is simply another way of saying that the matching of friends may tend to take place *within* a social or economic *group*, even though there is *individual* variation of such positions within the group. If such were the case, it would be misleading to compute measures based on individual variations. Rather the computation should be performed on the basis of groups, or class limits. In the Lundberg study, for instance, variations in the Chapin score on the part of members of a given constellation would be computed, not as deviations from the mean, but as to whether previously set up class intervals on the Chapin scale had been crossed (and how many). In the Loomis study the measure of association for members of intervisiting pairs on the "value of family living" scale would be based on whether the two members of the pair fell within the same class limits on the scale. The effect that this theoretically justifiable procedure would have in raising the degree of stratification closure found in intimate social relationships is obvious.

The problem of where to set up the class limits in the first place in dealing with a measured variable of the socio-economic status scale type is, of course, a considerable one. The inspection of sociometric charts to see if "breaking points" occur is a possibility, though Duncan and Artis found no unique solution to the problem in performing this operation with the Sewall scale in their Pennsylvania rural community study.<sup>60</sup> The problem clearly is bound up with the larger question of whether substantive status entities exist in the community, and whether the partic-

<sup>60</sup> "Some Problems of Stratification Research," pp. 24-25.

ular scale used has been validated on such a demonstrated status structure.

We have attempted to examine and assess in detail the merits and demerits of the four definition-ascertainment patterns of community stratification described above. Obviously, these differing patterns were designed to meet differing goals of the investigators, and, in line with the multidimensional approach, we have evaluated these techniques within the framework of carefulness of definition on the basis of one stratification dimension, or recognition of alternative dimensions, clarity and success of the ascertainment process, and verifiable demonstration of the relationship of other attributes or variables to the class groupings or positions as defined. Certainly either the status-community rating or the occupational stratification technique can meet these criteria if carefully handled. In the scientifically most satisfactory of these studies, the definition of class has been explicit, the ascertainment process has been clearly explained, an actual sample of people in each class grouping or aggregate has been secured by the ascertainment process, and information secured by interviews with these sample members has been quantitatively related to the respective sample of each class. It is suggested that such a quantification process should constitute the core of any community stratification study, even though additional information is provided qualitatively and anecdotally.

Finally, in many of the studies consistently recurring data demonstrating the tendency towards restriction of intimate social interaction to people of similar social status or economic position provide an additional analytical tool which can be of considerable value in the task of clarifying the nature of social stratification and its dynamic role in social relationships.

## Problem Areas in Theory and Research

The major theoretical orientation of this study, the multi-dimensional approach, has been discussed in Chapter I and has formed the basis of much of the analysis of the materials considered to this point. In this chapter we shall be concerned with certain problem areas in the stratification field to which either theoretical or empirical attention, or both, have been directed, and which have not been dealt with or have been only partially dealt with in our discussion thus far. For our purpose here, four such problem areas have been distinguished: (a) The Issue of Functionalism; (b) The Nature of the Status Order; (c) Class as Class Consciousness; and (d) Class, Occupation, and the Mass Society.

### The Issue of Functionalism

Briefly stated, functional analysis in sociology is concerned with the objective effects which particular societal patterns or structures have on other patterns or structures or other units of society, and on the maintenance, integration, and continuity of the society as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Since some form of differential allocation

<sup>1</sup> For a thorough and penetrating discussion of functional analysis, see Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1949), chap. i.

of prestige, power, and privilege appears to exist in all or nearly all known human societies, inquiry has been directed at what functions such stratification performs for society and whether social stratification is an inevitable and, in fact, desirable feature of societal life. For instance, Warner regards stratification as a necessary component of all complex societies in order that activities may be carried out under requisite leadership and that multiple activities and enterprises may be integrated into the needs of the society as a whole.<sup>2</sup> Parsons, in his analysis of stratification phenomena, has referred to social stratification as "a generalized aspect of the structure of all social systems," and has probed the question of "why such differential ranking is considered a really fundamental phenomenon of social systems."<sup>3</sup>

The issue in its most salient form has been raised in a disputative exchange between Davis and Moore on the one hand and Tumin on the other, stemming from an article by the former which presented a functional analysis of stratification.<sup>4</sup> In this article the authors attempt "to explain, in functional terms, the universal necessity which calls forth stratification in any social system"<sup>5</sup> and to specify what factors determine the rank of various social positions in the hierarchy of positions which make up the stratification structure of a society. Their argument may be summarized as follows: Any society must motivate its personnel to fill the various positions which are necessary for the production of goods and services and the functioning of its institutions, and to perform the duties of these positions diligently. Some of these positions require particular abilities or talents and are functionally

<sup>2</sup> W. Lloyd Warner and Associates, *Social Class in America*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> See Talcott Parsons, "An Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification," "A Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification," and "Social Classes and Class Conflict in the Light of Recent Sociological Theory,"—all chapters in his volume, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, revised ed. (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1954). The above quotations are found on pages 386 and 69 respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, X (April, 1945), 242-49. See, also, Kingsley Davis, "A Conceptual Analysis of Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, VII (June, 1942), 309-21; *Human Society* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1949), chap. xiv, "Caste, Class, and Stratification;" and his "Reply" to Tumin, *American Sociological Review*, XVIII (Aug., 1953), 394-97; and Moore's "Comment," same issue, p. 397.

<sup>5</sup> Davis and Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 242.



more important than others. In order to motivate the appropriate individuals from the limited pool of talent to aspire to these positions, to acquire the necessary training for them, and to perform their duties with diligence once in them, a system of differentially distributed rewards is necessary. These rewards consist of things which contribute to (a) sustenance and comfort, (b) humor and diversion, and (c) self-respect and ego expansion. They are "built into" particular positions and are inherent in the "rights" which are associated with the position, plus its accompaniments or perquisites. Positions are differentially ranked and thus provide differential rewards in terms of (a) their importance for society and (b) the amount of training and talent they require, i.e., differential scarcity of personnel. In short, "Social inequality is . . . an unconsciously evolved device by which societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Hence every society, no matter how simple or complex, must differentiate persons in terms of both prestige and esteem, and must therefore possess a certain amount of institutionalized inequality."<sup>6</sup> The amount or type of inequality need not be the same for all societies but varies with particular circumstances of a cultural and technological nature.

Tumin has countered these propositions in a number of details<sup>7</sup> but the most important of his arguments or "provisional assertions" cluster around two basic points:

1. That institutionalized inequality, i.e., social stratification, is not uniformly functional in the positive sense but is in many respects dysfunctional. This dysfunction appears in several areas: (a) The social stratification system fails to discover and recruit the full range of talent existing in the society because it presents obstacles for negatively privileged children in their access to education and in the development of appropriate motivation for training and mobility. Thus a system of stratification prevents the full productive resources of the society from developing and

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>7</sup> Melvin M. Tumin, "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis," *American Sociological Review*, XVIII (Aug., 1953), 387-94; see also his "Reply to Kingsley Davis," *American Sociological Review*, XVIII (Dec., 1953), 672-73; "Rewards and Task-Orientations," *American Sociological Review*, XX (Aug., 1955), 419-23; and "Obstacles to Creativity," *ETC*, XI (Summer, 1954), 261-71.

does not provide optimum distribution of personnel. (b) Social stratification has certain undesirable intrinsic effects in that it encourages conservatism, promotes class conflict, and develops unfavorable self-images among the less privileged, thus limiting their creativity, their identification with the society, their loyalty, and their participation. For purposes of subsequent discussion we may refer to these two types of dysfunction respectively as "recruitment effects" and "intrinsic effects."

2. That, in spite of the fact that all societies up to now appear to have used a system of inducements based on differential material rewards and status inequality for filling its various positions and for insuring adequate job performance, it has not been proved that it would not be possible to institutionalize some other type or types of motivation to perform these functionally necessary tasks. Three alternative motivations are suggested: (a) intrinsic work satisfaction, (b) social duty (reinforced by self-interest), and (c) social service. "To deny," states Tumin, "that such motivations could be institutionalized would be to overclaim our present knowledge. In part, also, such a claim would seem to deprive [*sic*] from an assumption that what has not been institutionalized yet in human affairs is incapable of institutionalization. Admittedly, historical experience affords us evidence we cannot afford to ignore. But such evidence cannot legitimately be used to deny absolutely the possibility of heretofore untried alternatives. Social innovation is as important a feature of human societies as social stability."<sup>8</sup>

Tumin does concede that any society must award differential prestige to those who conform to the normative order and those who deviate from that order in ways judged to be deleterious, and also that there must be a power differential between the old and the young for the achievement of effective socialization. But these distinctions, it is alleged, do not constitute social stratification in the accepted sense of the term.

While Davis's rebuttal contains a point-by-point answer to the Tumin analysis, again we can here focus only on the more crucial features. On the issue of "recruitment effects" Davis points out that the Davis-Moore analysis is concerned with the

<sup>8</sup> "Some Principles of Stratification; A Critical Analysis," p. 391.

reasons for the differential prestige of *positions* rather than individuals. The fact that some individuals, as a result of the social inheritance of disprivilege, are prevented from attaining the position in the stratification structure for which their innate abilities fit them is a function of the family system and the role of inheritance of status, not stratification itself. He calls attention to his discussion of the limiting effect of the family inheritance system in a treatment of class and caste in his volume, *Human Society*, to which Tumin had not referred. With regard to the "intrinsic effects," Davis's position appears to be that the actual results here are ambiguous; for instance, unfavorable self-images, he declares, may constitute a stimulus to competition and creative activity. As to Tumin's postulation of alternative motives for job selection and performance, Davis states that those based on pure voluntarism or altruism are unworkable as principal motivating forces for carrying out the needs of society, and the "duty-self-interest" motivation reduces to the rewards system of the Davis-Moore analysis. He suggests, finally, that the Davis-Moore analysis was based on abstract theoretical reasoning in an attempt to extract basic principles of the operation of stratification, whereas in an empirical case other forces would necessarily impinge, thus effecting an equilibrium in which the positive functioning of stratification would necessarily be modified.<sup>9</sup>

There is no doubt that the preceding exchange has been a useful one in helping to clarify the issue of social stratification and functionalism. The two viewpoints complement each other, each supplying necessary insights and emphases which the other either ignores or minimizes. If we look at the major areas of contention from the vantage point of a prior opportunity to survey both approaches, we may well arrive at the following conclusions.

Probably the most important point raised by Tumin is the role of inherited social position as a dysfunctional aspect of social stratification systems. While Davis is technically correct in in-

<sup>9</sup> Davis also states that the Davis-Moore analysis was not concerned with the question of whether stratification was theoretically "avoidable," i.e., its inevitability. It is difficult to concur in this inference in view of the passages cited above, *viz.* "to explain. . . the universal necessity which calls forth stratification in any social system," and "every society. . . must therefore possess a certain amount of institutionalized inequality."



sisting that the Davis-Moore analysis was concerned only with the question of *positions*, the fact remains that all known stratification systems appear to be linked with the kinship structure and family transmission of inequality to succeeding generations.<sup>10</sup> A realistic discussion of the functionality of stratification, then, must be concerned with the implications of this linkage. What it suggests is not that the Davis-Moore analysis of the functionality of stratification and the differential rewards mechanism, in itself, is incorrect, but that the degree of positive functionality which it has in practice in a given society is tempered by the degree to which opportunities for social mobility are also present in the society. The degree of social mobility present will, in turn, be a function of the range of dispersion of wealth, status, and material advantages, the presence or absence of institutionalized obstacles to rise in social position, such as caste or estate lines, and the opportunities for access to general education, technical training, and adequate motivation. The very last point is, of course, a function of the socialization process. Thus the functional effects of a system of stratification can be realistically assessed only in terms of the intricate interplay among at least three elements: the pattern of rewards and inequalities, the kinship system, and social mobility.

The question of the dysfunctionality of the "intrinsic effects" of social stratification is a moot one and has many difficulties, some of a theoretical nature, some stemming from the lack of available evidence. Certainly unfavorable self-images can develop out of low position in the stratification scale, and there is abundant evidence from many of the community studies surveyed earlier of a positive correlation between class position and participation in community affairs. Certainly class conflict carried to an extreme has ravaging effects on a society. On the other hand, as Davis points out, an unfavorable self-image may lead to greater creative activity. The whole question, moreover, must be placed in the context of a comparison of whatever dysfunctions may result in this area with those positive functions which may result

<sup>10</sup> See Tumin, "Reply to Kingsley Davis." For valuable discussions of the interrelationships of stratification and kinship structures see the articles by Talcott Parsons cited above.



from the stratification system as a whole. The question of what unit is the base of reference for functionalism—whether the society as a whole, those who are at the top, middle, or bottom—also has relevance here. And, finally, any total assessment and resolution of this question is likely to come perilously close to bringing into play the battery of value premises which always lie latent in problems of this type and magnitude: What are the proper goals of personality development? What is the best balance between work and play in human life? What is the proper equilibrium of forces catering to the needs of society and those directly satisfying the needs of individuals? etc. Perhaps the most that can be said, then, at this point is that the question of intrinsic dysfunctional effects of stratification is a legitimate one to raise, and that theories concerning the functionalism of social stratification must take the considerations which it raises seriously into account.

Tumin's advancement of alternative motivational schemes must be considered under two aspects. His general point that students of society should be wary of assuming that what has not yet been institutionalized in human affairs is incapable of institutionalization seems to us to be important and well taken. The fight against ethnocentrism in the behavioral sciences, though generally successful, has been a long and hard one. It should not be lost at the flanks, as it were, by refusing to include the time dimension of the future as a point of reference in considering the variety of potential arrangements of cultural items and patterns.<sup>11</sup> Of course, historical and anthropological data on all known societies are highly important in estimating both the possibility of institutionalization and probability of success of alternative cultural arrangements. But relevant data must come also from existing knowledge about the potentials of human personality and its development under various types of socialization. It would be risky to conclude that either the science of personality development and functioning—psychology—or the disciplines which deal with social

<sup>11</sup> Robert Bierstedt's felicitous term "temporocentrism" would be an appropriate one to apply to the phenomenon of excluding from cultural consideration any item or pattern which had not been already developed, had he not used the term for a somewhat different point. See his "The Limitations of Anthropological Methods in Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology*, LIV (July, 1948), 22-30.

collectivities—sociology and cultural anthropology—have advanced to the point where definitive assertions can be made about the unfeasibility of such cultural arrangements as Tumin has suggested.

On the specific level, however, the cumulative weight of existing historical and anthropological evidence does not support the feasibility of Tumin's suggested alternatives of a voluntaristic and altruistic nature as the principal, rather than supplementary, motivating forces for occupational distribution and performance.<sup>12</sup> The problem is certainly worth additional study and perhaps much could be learned from further research into historical and contemporary collective and nominally equalitarian communities where such motivations and cultural arrangements have been installed, at least for a time.<sup>13</sup> However, the evidence available to date favors the contention that some system of stratification, or in Davis-Moore terms, unequal positional rewards, is a functional necessity. More practical efforts might then be directed to limiting the erosion of its functionalism in a specific society by reducing the range and decisiveness of differential rewards, minimizing the role of social inheritance, ensuring adequate minima of life styles, and keeping the channels of social mobility wide open.

### The Nature of the Status Order

One cannot have failed to note in the research studies dealt with thus far the considerable, though by no means exclusive, concern with the social-status dimension of stratification. Moreover, a number of influential theorists have placed social status at the very heart of class or stratification analysis. For instance, MacIver defines a social class as follows: "*We shall then mean by a social class any portion of a community which is marked off from the rest, not by limitations arising out of language, locality, func-*

<sup>12</sup> Tumin's later argument concerning conscientious job performance from the analogy of the parent-child relationship is less than convincing, in view of the decisive affectional and blood relational bond between parent and child that is not present in the work relationship. See his "Rewards and Task-Orientations."

<sup>13</sup> For two recent studies of Israeli collective or co-operative communities which offer somewhat conflicting conclusions with regard to the Davis-Moore thesis, see Eva Rosenfeld, "Social Stratification in a 'Classless' Society," *American Sociological Review*, XVI (Dec., 1951), 766-74; and Richard D. Schwartz, "Functional Alternatives to Inequality," *American Sociological Review*, XX (Aug., 1955), 424-30.

tion, or specialization, but primarily by social status." (Italics as in original). He goes on to add:

Such a subjective factor involves also, as a rule, objective differences, income levels, occupational distinctions, distinctions of birth, race, culture, and so forth, within the society. But these differences, apart from a recognized order of superiority and of inferiority, would not establish cohesive groups. It is the sense of status, sustained by economic, political, or ecclesiastical power and by the distinctive modes of life and cultural expressions corresponding to them, which draws class apart from class, gives cohesion to each, and stratifies a whole society.<sup>14</sup>

And Parsons has made ranking, or evaluation, in terms of the value system of the society central to his analysis of social stratification,<sup>15</sup> as has Speier.<sup>16</sup>

In attempting to clarify some of the problems inherent in the concepts of status and the status order of a society we must first take note of a troublesome source of semantic confusion. While most sociologists have reserved the term "status" for the denotation of position in a hierarchy determined by subjective feelings or attitudes which reciprocally attribute superiority and inferiority to the various members of a society—that is, have confined its use to the subjective realm—occasionally one finds the term used to designate position in one of the objective<sup>17</sup> stratification dimensions. Thus one finds references, for instance, to a person's "economic status," meaning his position on the continuum of income and wealth. While the problem is purely a terminological one, confusion would be avoided if the term "status" were confined to the subjective realm, and the neutral term "position" were used for a place in a specifically objective hierarchy.

Another needed point of clarification is the distinction between status as a unitary dimension of stratification and the the-

<sup>14</sup> R. M. MacIver, *Society* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1937), pp. 166-67.

<sup>15</sup> See his essays, cited above.

<sup>16</sup> Hans Speier, "Social Stratification in the Urban Community," *American Sociological Review*, I (April, 1936), 193-202.

<sup>17</sup> It should be kept in mind that a person's position in the subjective dimension of status may be determined "objectively" in the methodological sense—that is, by explicit and valid techniques which collate the judgments of others about his "status."

oretically and empirically numerous *criteria* which may be used by community residents to form their status judgments. Economic position, political power, style of life, moral behavior—all these and others in varying combinations may constitute the constellation of factors which a given individual may take into consideration in making a status judgment about another person. This fact, however, does not threaten the unitary nature of the status judgment, once it is made, nor abolish the need for a clear distinction among the three stratification dimensions—status, economic power, and political power—so that they are conceptualized as distinct and separate hierarchies. In other words, the rationale of the multidimensional approach, which demands such conceptual distinctions both in theory and in research operation, is not impaired by the fact that two of its dimensions may be used as partial determinants of the third.

*The variety and integration of status judgments.* While the multidimensional approach conceives of status as a dimension conceptually separate from other hierarchies of stratification, it is obvious that, since multiple criteria may be used for status judgments, a variety of separate judgments can be made even by any one person about another person. A may rank B high in occupational terms but low with respect to consumption patterns or personal morality, or B may hold high office but receive a negative evaluation because he performs it poorly. This raises the problem for stratification analysis of whether this congeries of status judgments about a given person coalesces into some general or over-all judgment about a person's place in the community, and whether such a general evaluation or judgment may be distinguished from the types of judgments which either make it up or are irrelevant to it.

A number of writers on class have noted the existence of variant types of status judgments. Goldhamer and Shils, for instance, distinguish between "total status judgments," where the person as a whole is being evaluated, and "segmental judgments," where the evaluation is made in terms of a particular role played



or attribute possessed by the individual.<sup>18</sup> Davis makes a distinction between "prestige," which denotes the "invidious value" attached to a given "position," that is, "a place in a given social structure" (a "position," in turn, can be either a "status," i.e., "a position in the general institutional system," or an "office," which is "a position in a deliberately created organization"), and "esteem," which is the invidious value given to the way in which a person carries out the duties of the position—in other words, performs his role. These two evaluations, in a given case, need not coincide: "A person may hold a position of high prestige, and yet, by virtue of his behavior in that position, enjoy little esteem."<sup>19</sup> MacIver, using the term "prestige" in the opposite sense, distinguishes between "status" and "prestige," the latter denoting a personal quality dependent on specific contribution or achievement as distinct from the status or evaluated place in an established hierarchy.<sup>20</sup>

It appears to be held rather widely, either explicitly or implicitly, that the status judgments, varying in type or criterion, which one person makes about another are combined into some more or less structured over-all status judgment which is relevant for social stratification, and that the latter is what is meant when one speaks of a person's "social status." Certainly this assumption is made by those researchers who have made social status or prestige ratings the committed basis of their community stratification procedures. We note its presence, too, among theorists of class. For instance, Davis speaks of a "station," which is "a cluster of positions which may be combined in one individual and recognized as so combined in a great many cases." He adds, "Whereas a status or office defines one's position with reference to a limited sector of social interaction, a station defines one's generalized position (the sum total of one's major positions) in the structure."<sup>21</sup> The term "stratum" is then used to refer to "a mass of persons in a given society enjoying roughly the same station."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Herbert Goldhamer and Edward A. Shils, "Types of Power and Status," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLV (Sept., 1939), 171-82.

<sup>19</sup> Kingsley Davis, "A Conceptual Analysis of Stratification," pp. 309-13, *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> R. M. MacIver, *The Web of Government* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947), pp. 114-15.

<sup>21</sup> Kingsley Davis, "A Conceptual Analysis of Stratification," p. 310.

<sup>22</sup> *Loc. cit.*

Class, caste, and estate are distinguished as types of strata. Beth, in discussing how an "elite" may be ascertained, advances the concept of "total social prestige," which is made up by combining an array of separate prestige scores which an individual may be given by virtue of type of participation in a wide assortment of groups which are themselves prestige ranked.<sup>23</sup>

If such over-all status judgments are, in fact, made in a given society, the question arises whether the various separate status judgments which are combined to form it are equally weighted. The likelihood is that they are not. Beth has suggested the need for a system of weights based on cultural norms in deriving the "total social prestige" score. And Parsons has noted that a society will tend to emphasize certain criteria as more crucial for social stratification than others, in terms of its dominant values. He suggests that the occupational system is the dominant element in American social stratification.<sup>24</sup> Certainly the research evidence currently available, in conjunction with general observation, would lead us to hypothesize that the occupational-economic complex is at the core of general status judgments or ratings in the American culture. However, the evidence also indicates that there is *more* than this core complex—an important addendum consisting of such criteria as cultural style of life, social participation, personal behavior, community power, and others, none of them unrelated to the occupational-economic complex but none of them entirely coincidental with it. Apart from the likelihood of the general dominance of the occupational-economic factors, the exact system of weights used in combining these various criteria into an overall status judgment is at present unknown.

*Status Conflict.* Thus far we have been discussing the integration of status judgments made by one person about another. A further question of crucial significance relates to the degree of consensus about such judgments present among the various members of a community. That is, to what extent can it be

<sup>23</sup> Marian W. Beth, "The Elite and the Elites," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVII (Mar., 1942), 746-55.

<sup>24</sup> See Talcott Parsons, "A Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification," and also the earlier paper of which this is a revision.

assumed that the various members of a community will have a sufficiently similar set of value standards with regard to social stratification that, barring misinformation or lack of information, they will rate other community members or groups in the same way? Obviously the concept of a system of hierarchical statuses depends on the assumption of a widespread consensus on the standards of evaluation<sup>25</sup> and at least an oblique concession of status inferiority by those at the alleged bottom of the status hierarchy. If such common standards and widely dispersed consensus do not exist, then some form of opposition of status claims may be present which could hardly be placed within the framework of status hierarchy. This problem has been articulated with considerable perception and cogency by Stone and Form.<sup>26</sup>

Their discussion is based, in part, on research into the status structure of a small Midwestern city of about ten thousand population called, in their report, "Vansburg." As the result of a number of factors, particularly the recent entrance into the community of managerial personnel from national corporations with branches in the city and also from various state governmental agencies, a "status contest" had developed between these "cosmopolites" and the "old family" upper class of the community. The former group emphasized different standards of status, e.g., "bigness" and different kinds of attire, took over many of the higher-status clubs and associations, displayed different patterns of moral conduct, and maintained social closure. This status contest and the different valuations upon which it was based had wide ramifications and were recognized and appeared in interview responses in the form of conflicting evaluations which extended down through the middle-status range of the community. Another finding reported is that ten long-term residents of the city, who were asked to

<sup>25</sup> Or, as Duncan and Artis have noted, the same result may be achieved by highly intercorrelated criteria, thus allowing for the convergence of differentially based but similar judgments on the same individuals. See their discussion of this point in *Social Stratification in a Pennsylvania Rural Community*, p. 21. Of course, unless the number of intercorrelated items were fantastically large, considerable consensus in evaluational standards among segments in a community of any size would always be present in such a case.

<sup>26</sup> Gregory P. Stone and William H. Form, "Instabilities in Status: The Problem of Hierarchy in the Community Study of Status Arrangements," *American Sociological Review*, XVIII (April, 1953), 149-62.



rate a list of community occupations on a seven-point scale, showed considerable agreement on which occupations were to be assigned to the extreme ends of the scale but were in much less agreement on those averaging in the middle range.

On the basis of these and similar considerations, Stone and Form declare that the study of status relationships may optimally be put in the framework of the concept of "status arrangements," which allows for situations where consensus-based hierarchy may not be immediately present but may be thought of simply as the goal towards which existing status relationships are tending. "Specifically," they state, "one might propose the hypothesis that, *ceteris paribus*, status arrangements will tend over time to take on the aspect of hierarchical structures. It is in this sense, and in this sense only, that the *essential* [their italics] nature of status arrangements may be said to be hierarchical."<sup>27</sup> Those immediately existing arrangements, then, which are not hierarchical may be regarded as "instabilities in status." Such status instabilities they consider to be frequent in incidence and perhaps even the rule in urban communities.

Without attempting an exhaustive typology of status instabilities, Stone and Form identify what they regard as three (not mutually exclusive) empirical types. (a) "Status opposition" refers to the type already identified in Vansburg, where two or more status groups are carrying on an indecisive contest for status and therefore exist in a horizontal or oblique rather than vertical or hierarchical relationship. (b) "Vertical polarization" is used to describe a community situation wherein status groups are clearly recognized at both extremes of the status scale, but where the middle area is made up of an amorphous mass of persons and social circles, a "status aggregate" in their term, who lack clearly identifiable common symbols, are not characterized by tight social closure, and whose internal differentiation along status lines is ambiguous. (c) "Unranked status groups" are groups which have rejected many of the values and symbols of the larger community and supplanted them with standards of their own. There is no community consensus on their ranking, and their own evaluation of their status position differs considerably from such community

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.



evaluations as are available. They are alleged to be not an integral part of the general status structure though related to it by certain functions. Bohemians, intellectuals, artists, and revolutionists are among those groups offered as examples of this type.

There is no doubt that in their research report and theoretical discussion, Stone and Form have raised some important questions for students of social stratification. We do not concur in all of their interpretations—or perhaps more accurately, in the scope of their interpretations—however, and will indicate why in a series of comments, the first being on the thesis of “instability,” the rest on the thesis of the prevalence of non-hierarchical status arrangements.

1. There appears to be no theoretical reason why nonhierarchical status arrangements, insofar as they exist, must inevitably tend towards hierarchy. It is quite conceivable that in urbanized areas where social contacts are highly selective and segmentalized, conflicts of status evaluation might exist indefinitely without social pressures forcing a resolution of the issue. Thus we prefer the term “status conflict” to stand for the phenomena described, a term which does not rest on an unproved theory of social change. This comment, however, does not concede the prevalence of status conflict as suggested by Stone and Form.

2. Status opposition of the type described in Vansburg may represent only a contest of status claims *within* a larger grouping whose status position is relatively unambiguous. That is, while the “old families” and the “cosmopolites” were contesting for status, both may have been recognized by the rest of the community and by themselves as belonging generally in the upper portion of the status hierarchy, the only point at issue being their relative position within that upper portion. It would be interesting in this connection to know whether partisans of either group in the community graded the other group down severely in status. We suspect that they did not. If our hypothesis is correct, this would significantly narrow the scope of the status conflict present even where it existed and would place it within the framework of a larger hierarchical arrangement. It should be noted, too, that the concept of “vertical polarization” concedes a general ranking of the community into three segments of the status hierarchy,

with various types of status conflict confined to internal jockeying for position within the middle segment.

3. The above point may be extended to the alleged "unranked status groups" of the type which Stone and Form emphasize. While the status position of artists and intellectuals doubtless has some elements of ambiguity about it, there is considerable reason to believe that they are generally accorded a status position *within* the upper middle portion of the American status system.<sup>28</sup> Certainly the allegation that they are essentially outside the status system and "unranked" requires much more empirical verification than is currently available and is a less parsimonious hypothesis than one which assumes that they have characteristic occupations and styles of life which are a part of the general evaluative system of status identification in America.

4. In a general sense the question of status opposition is linked to certain methodological considerations which have received far from sufficient attention in the field of social stratification. We refer to the interpretation and validity of responses and remarks relating to social status and social class made by residents of American communities in standard interviewing situations. The subject of social status or social class is an affective or "touchy" one, embedded as it is in the patriotic myth of a "classless" and egalitarian society and the ego feelings and crucial life experiences of the particular respondent. This means at the very least that considerable caution must be exercised by social scientists in interpreting and evaluating remarks of respondents about status and class, and at the most may indicate that more subtle and necessarily time-consuming techniques of eliciting such responses than are currently the practice may be needed if actual attitudes are to be optimally discerned.

Two subareas of difficulty may be designated. (a) Since status differences are linked up with different life chances and with ego-involvement, remarks about status and the status position of other persons and groups, particularly where the reference is upward, may have overtones of, or be accompanied by, evidences of hostility towards the person or group being evaluated. It would

<sup>28</sup> See Milton M. Gordon, "Social Class and American Intellectuals," *American Association of University Professors Bulletin*, XL (Winter, 1954-55), 517-28.

seem that hostility and status are separate dimensions, and that the evincement of hostility towards another person may not preclude the reluctant attribution to him of higher status. Thus considerable care must be exercised to separate the wheat of status attribution, as it were, from the chaff of hostility which may frequently accompany it. (b) Because of both the egalitarian ideology and the factor of ego-involvement, it is not unlikely that many persons, particularly in the lower status levels, will be reluctant to express their true status feelings, or their full ramifications, in nonintensive interviews. Certainly there is no a priori reason to assume that a stranger with a clip-board is going to be given highly accurate information about the ordinary person's true attitudes in an area where those attitudes may threaten both his values of cultural patriotism and the self-image he wishes the outside world to attribute to him. Extensive community participant observation and intensive interviewing including projective tests can ameliorate this problem, though it is not at all patent that its full solution is methodologically possible.

These considerations apply, of course, to a broader area of stratification analysis than the Stone and Form thesis. But with respect to this thesis they suggest that the amount of status opposition indicated by the use of current techniques of investigation may be *in part* a function of inherent limitations in those techniques in relation to the difficult and affective area to which they are applied.

5. The evidence from many studies of other communities, some of them reviewed earlier, does not support the view that status opposition as a major ordering of status relationships is a typical characteristic of American communities. Stone and Form themselves report that a pretest of the Vansburg interview schedule in another city of the same size pointed to the more usual hierarchical status arrangement. Of course, it should be noted that even in the other studies referred to perfect agreement on the status order and status placement is not found and the discarding of highly deviant ratings or raters is a common phenomenon. This suggests our concluding point that the issue is one of degree and combination rather than mutually exclusive substantive alternatives. The concept of a "status hierarchy" as applicable to

modern industrial societies, like most concepts in the science of human behavior, is an abstraction induced from a highly complex pattern of human interaction. It is sufficiently related to the realities of that empirical pattern to make the human behavior which constitutes it more understandable and meaningful than would be the case if it were not used. However, the behavior pattern which it attempts to describe, like most human behavior patterns, is not unalloyed with other elements. In industrialized and urbanized communities of the Western World where political designations of status or rigid caste or estate lines are absent, doubtless any concrete set of status relationships patterned dominantly as hierarchical will be alloyed with a degree of status opposition varying with the local situation. It is to the credit of the Stone and Form analysis that it has raised the issues which logically demand a realistic interpretation of this kind.

*The status continuum theory.* A further question with regard to the status order is whether, even if it is dominantly arranged as a hierarchy, that hierarchy is in the form of more or less distinct status groups marked off from one another in some significant and observable fashion, or is constituted as a status continuum consisting simply of an array of individual status positions—a status order, as it were, without groupings or cut-off points. As we have seen, community researches such as those of Warner and Hollingshead are based on the former position. A number of theorists and researchers, however, have argued for the status-continuum viewpoint. Among these are Myrdal,<sup>29</sup> Cox,<sup>30</sup> Lenski,<sup>31</sup> Cuber and Kenkel,<sup>32</sup> and Hetzler.<sup>33</sup> It should be noted that proponents of the status-continuum theory usually do not deny the

<sup>29</sup> Gunnar Myrdal, with the assistance of Richard Sterner and Arnold Rose, *An American Dilemma* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 675.

<sup>30</sup> Oliver Cromwell Cox, *Caste, Class, and Race* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1948). See, particularly pp. 149, 301, and 304.

<sup>31</sup> Gerhard E. Lenski, "American Social Classes: Statistical Strata or Social Groups?" *American Journal of Sociology*, LVIII (Sept., 1952), 139-44.

<sup>32</sup> John F. Cuber and William F. Kenkel, *Social Stratification in the United States* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954). See particularly chaps. ii and xiii.

<sup>33</sup> Stanley A. Hetzler, "An Investigation of the Distinctiveness of Social Classes," *American Sociological Review*, XVIII (Oct., 1953), 493-97.



empirical usefulness of dividing the continuum arbitrarily, thus setting up "statistical" or "classificatory" classes for purposes of cross tabulation with dependent variables or for ease in communication. Cuber and Kenkel have presented the most extensive theoretical arguments for the status continuum viewpoint, but since these are based in large part on specific researches by Lenski, Kenkel, and Hetzler, we shall briefly review these studies first.

Lenski asked twenty-four residents of Danielson, Connecticut, a community of approximately six thousand people, to rate those families whom they knew in a random sample of the community's families according to their "relative standing."<sup>34</sup> Most members of the judges' panel were long-time residents of the community and the panel was drawn from the major social groups. The judges were given no instructions regarding the number of classes or levels to be used. The following results were reported: (a) There was no consensus on the number of classes used. One rater used three strata, four used four, seven used five, eight used six, and four identified seven strata. (b) Even among those raters who used the same number of strata, there was no agreement on the upper and lower limits of each of the strata. (c) Most of the raters constantly changed the number of strata used during the course of the rating process and treated the strata as heuristic devices rather than community realities. (d) Several raters volunteered the information that they could subclassify the families almost indefinitely, given time. (e) Many raters in the initial stages of the rating asked Lenski how many strata they should use, indicating the lack of a specific pre-existing frame of reference. (f) In spite of the lack of agreement on the number and nature of the strata, there was a high order of agreement on the relative prestige status of the study-group families, indicating the validity of the technique used as a device for ascertaining the status judgments of the community. Lenski concludes from these findings that, while well-recognized status differences exist among the families of Danielson, they are in the form of a status continuum rather than discrete social classes.

Kenkel studied the distribution of three status-relevant vari-

<sup>34</sup> Lenski, *op. cit.* See also Cuber and Kenkel, *op. cit.*, chap. v, "Status and Wealth in a New England Mill Town."

ables in a random sample of residents of Columbus, Ohio.<sup>35</sup> These were prestige of occupation as measured by the North-Hatt scale, rental value of dwelling, and desirability of dwelling area as determined by a subjective rating made by the investigator. Each of these variables, and the composite score made up of all of them, was found to be distributed in a relatively nonclustering fashion, without clear cut-off points or "breaks" which would suggest grouping on the relevant scale. Also, a study of the friendship choices of the respondents revealed that while each had a restricted status range within which intimate associates were chosen, these individual ranges showed considerable overlapping and did not suggest confinement within well-recognized class boundaries.

Hetzler asked a random sample of white adults in a small Ohio city to indicate by a pencil mark their position with respect to "social class" in the community, on a 12-inch scale with only two reference points, "highest" and "lowest."<sup>36</sup> This device was also used for self-rating on the concept of "social position." When the check points of the various members of the sample were superimposed on one another they formed, for each concept, a unimodal, approximately normally distributed curve, without sharp breaks which would indicate discrete classes.

In addition to the evidence from these studies, Cuber and Kenkel, in propounding the status continuum viewpoint, cite a number of other considerations including the disparity in number of classes seen in American communities by various researchers, significant numbers of marginals in the structures described who cannot be classified, and alleged technical difficulties in those studies which claim to have discovered discrete classes. We shall again place our evaluation of this important theoretical conceptualization in the context of a series of comments.

1. Proponents of the status continuum theory have not clearly distinguished between two conceptually alternative, though in relative form not mutually exclusive, possibilities with respect to the nature of the alleged continuum. Is it a continuum because *each individual regards the status order in his community as a*

<sup>35</sup> This study is reported on in Cuber and Kenkel, *op. cit.*, chap. vii, "Social Stratification in Columbus, Ohio."

<sup>36</sup> Hetzler, *op. cit.*

*continuum* and ranks other persons or families only in individual status positions, or because each individual has a rough conceptualization of a number of status groups and their nature *but these separate constructs overlap so much and have so little agreement that the objective composite result may be regarded as a continuum?* There is an important difference in these alternatives with respect to the consequences for community dynamics and the research techniques which attempt to discover and report them. If the former alternative is held, we do not concur that it is either theoretically likely in view of the probable nature of human processes of perception, or empirically proved by currently available research. There is a well-recognized propensity among human beings to categorize variable data: note such commonly used categorizations as "tall," "short," "medium height," "smart," "average intelligence," "dumb," etc. While such categories are "rough" and have no sharp cut-off points, they *are* categories, and it seems unlikely that similar categories would not be used in the perception of such a variable as social status. If the second alternative is chosen, then the problem is placed in the perspective of questions concerning the *degree* of articulation of the categories and how much agreement there exists about their nature among the various members of a community.

2. Kenkel's finding that several variables associated with generalized social status, such as rental value of dwelling or type of dwelling area, or an index made up of several of them, vary along a continuum does not appear to us to be decisive in this issue. The fundamental locus of the answers to the questions about the nature of the status order is in the minds of men—in the social psychological realm of evaluation. If substantive status groups exist to a meaningful degree,<sup>87</sup> they spring essentially from the evaluative process which is free either to impose or not to impose significant boundary lines on any continuum or combination of continua and give these lines some degree of significance. Such eval-

<sup>87</sup> Cuber and Kenkel include the dimensions of "power" and "privilege" in their "continuum theory of stratification." That is, they claim that these dimensions, as well as prestige or status, are in continuum form in American society. There is not much argument in the field here, however. No one would deny that incomes, for instance, or wealth form a continuum in the United States. The crucial area of dispute is the status dimension.



uations, to be sure, will have results for certain areas of behavior which, if the evaluations are salient and consistent, will cluster at the status levels so delineated. Such variables are likely to be in the areas of attitudes, the subtler aspects of behavior, and social participation and interrelationships. The evidence from many studies which we have examined on these points is far from exhaustive or conclusive. In the realm of intimate social relationships, for instance, some tendency towards closure on status group lines has been found, but there is also evidence of substantial overlapping.

3. The Hetzler study is based on self-ratings as to status, which, in terms of the problems raised by ego-involvement, are least likely to give a valid picture of the status order. Furthermore, it is not clear what relationship may be expected between a conceptualization of the status order in a respondent's mind and his graphic representation of a particular position in it on a scale of the type used in the study, nor what a collation of such judgments actually demonstrates, in view of the complications raised by the introduction of an unaccustomed spatial frame of reference.

4. The Lenski study presents a strong case for the existence of a status continuum in Danielson, Connecticut. However, other studies such as those of Warner, Davis and the Gardners, and Hollingshead describe communities where residents make distinctions between more or less substantive levels or strata. The Hollingshead study, in particular, was carried out by means of a well-articulated stratification technique which clearly established a high degree of agreement on the nature of the status order in Elmtown. This may suggest that the issue is a function of the community. Moreover, in assessing the results of the Lenski study, it may be well to raise again the consideration which we proposed earlier—namely, that individual prestige distinctions may exist within the framework of larger prestige distinctions among levels or strata. An instruction such as Lenski's to "rank these families according to their relative 'standing'"<sup>38</sup> may suggest to the rater that the finest distinctions which he is capable of making are being called for. Lenski's conclusions concerning the absence of any larger groupings are, for the most part, based on a series of inferences.

<sup>38</sup> Lenski, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-42.



It would be interesting to know whether the same conclusion would have been in order if he had interviewed his judges intensively after the rating procedure had been completed, in a direct confrontation of the issue of their conceptualization of the structure of the community.

5. The concept of the American status structure as a status continuum is a model which lies at one extreme of a scale of possibilities, the other end of which is represented by a series of sharply delineated status groups whose nature and limits are a matter of complete agreement among all Americans in all communities. We suggest that the empirical answer as to the nature of the American status order lies somewhere between these two extremes. Specifically, the following general propositions, based on the nature of the available evidence, suggest themselves:

a) In most communities, while individuals will vary in their conception of the status order, some perhaps seeing it as a pure status continuum, many or most individuals will have some rough or approximate conception of status levels. These are not likely to have sharp cut-off points, thus leaving room for many "marginals," but the degree of crystallization of the levels or strata present will vary from person to person. The conception of these levels will vary with ego's status position in the community. Individual prestige distinctions will be made within these levels.

b) The degree to which consensus on the nature of these levels is present will vary with particular community conditions and will differ considerably from community to community. In some, a fairly high order of agreement, adjusted for differences in status level of judges, will be found. In others, the amount of disagreement will be so large that the attempt to precipitate out a series of approximate status levels for the community would be relatively meaningless. However, in view of the conjunction of the human tendency to categorize, with the exposure of most Americans to the dominant value system of the culture through the socialization process and mass communications media, the number of such "chaotic" situations may be quite small.

c) Optimum research techniques for discovering the nature of the status order as it appears to community residents will include intensive interviewing with specific confrontation of the

issue, probes, and at an appropriately early point in the interview, projective tests.

*Status Inconsistency.* Since, as we have noted, there appears to be a multiplicity of criteria on which "segmental" status judgments may be made, it is possible that any given individual may represent in himself dispersed positions on the several criteria which are the basis for the judgments. For instance, he may be high in economic position but low in education, or community power. Thus there is a certain amount of inconsistency in his over-all status situation. Obviously the situation may theoretically vary from one where positions on all of the criteria used in the society are uniform, to one of maximum dispersal or disagreement.

The problem is both conceptually and semantically complicated by the fact that many of the writers who have noted this phenomenon have used the term "status" to refer to position on one of the objective hierarchies (for instance, income) without clearly specifying the possible or presumed connection with a segmental status judgment based on it. That is, they have used it, from our point of view, either incorrectly or elliptically. However, if we keep in mind the nature of this problem—namely, that in any series of criteria used for judging social status some are objective hierarchies on which a person has an objective position, but that these objective positions are the basis for segmental status judgments—then we may proceed with our discussion with a minimum of confusion over the terms to be encountered.

Benoit-Smullyan, in an early discussion of this problem distinguished three types of "status": economic, political, and prestige, each representing a position in one of three hierarchies.<sup>39</sup> He notes that an individual or group does not necessarily occupy a similar position in each of these hierarchies. For instance, in certain societies high prestige status may be awarded to learned or holy men whose economic and political statuses are low. However, it is declared that prestige status is to a large degree dependent on the other status types. Thus he proceeds to the idea of

<sup>39</sup> Emile Benoit-Smullyan, "Status, Status Types, and Status Interrelations," *American Sociological Review*, IX (April, 1944), 151-61.

"status conversion," the process whereby high standing on one dimension is used to gain high standing on one or both of the other dimensions. For instance, wealth may be converted into power by bribery, or into prestige by effecting a marriage with an aristocratic family. As a result of status-conversion processes, states Benoit-Smullyan, there is a tendency in all societies for the different types of status to become distributed in parallel fashion—that is, for any given person's position in the three hierarchies to become similar. This process is called "status equilibration," and a social situation where such a high correlation emerges among the different forms of status is called an "equilibrium status structure." It is hypothesized, on the basis of historical evidence, that a situation where the forces of law or custom seriously interfere with this equilibrating tendency generates tensions favorable to revolution.

Hughes calls attention to certain "dilemmas and contradictions" in the assignment of status positions in the fluid American social structure.<sup>40</sup> For many of the high-status positions, he points out, the American stereotyped expectation is that they will be filled by persons of white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant attributes, and sometimes only by males. Dilemmas of status assignment are created when persons without these attributes reach these positions by dint of occupational mobility. This is exemplified by the Negro professional man: "The dilemma, for those whites who meet such a person, is that of having to choose whether to treat him as a Negro or as a member of his profession."<sup>41</sup> The Negro professional himself, in such a situation, faces a dilemma of choice of proper role to play. Thus Hughes raises the question of what happens when two differently evaluated status attributes (in this case, low ethnic and high occupational) inhere in the same person. No empirical answer is given to this question, but it is pointed out that in the realm of social organization, such occupational advances are likely to result in an "elaboration of social segregation," where the Negro professional man, for instance, tends to serve only Negro clients, or otherwise be isolated from extensive

<sup>40</sup> Everett Cherrington Hughes, "Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status," *American Journal of Sociology*, L (March, 1945), 353-59.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 357.

contact with whites, or the woman doctor (in an occupation traditionally reserved for men) may treat only women and children. Even in those instances where a white client of ordinary views makes use of a Negro professional's services, it is suggested that the contact is likely to remain purely professional and specific, and will rarely be extended into a general social relationship. Such processes are interpreted as having the immediate function of reducing the force of status contradiction.

Inconsistencies or contradictions in status have also been discussed by Sorokin,<sup>42</sup> and researched as an independent variable in behavior by Adams<sup>43</sup> and Lenski.<sup>44</sup> A conspectus of the accumulated writings and reports reveals that the concept has been applied to three distinguishable referents: the individual, the group conceived of as having unit characteristics (e.g., an aristocratic group with low political power), and the group conceptualized as a pattern of varying individual status consistencies. Adams, under the concept of "status congruency," studied the effect of this variable, in both its group patterning and its individual aspects, on the behavior of bomber crews. Among the findings were that social performance of the crews was related positively and linearly to status congruency, while technical performance appeared to be related negatively and nonlinearly.

Lenski has presented a well-articulated theoretical rationale for the use of status consistency as a major variable in stratification analysis, significant for the causal analysis of behavior in the general society, particularly social change. Starting from the premise of the multidimensional approach, he points to the possibility that an individual may have different positions in the several hierarchies, and that this inconsistency may produce a form of "marginality," which has behavior implications. Thus he suggests a nonvertical "consistency dimension" for stratification analysis; "In this dimension units may be compared with respect to the degree of consistency of their positions in the several vertical

<sup>42</sup> Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Society, Culture, and Personality* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 289-94.

<sup>43</sup> Stuart Adams, "Status Congruency as a Variable in Small Group Performance," *Social Forces*, XXXII (Oct., 1953), 16-22.

<sup>44</sup> Gerhard E. Lenski, "Status Crystallization: A Non-Vertical Dimension of Social Status," *American Sociological Review*, XIX (Aug., 1954), 405-13.



hierarchies.”<sup>45</sup> To this dimension he attaches the term “status crystallization.” While he appears by implication to relate the dimension to a denial of the usefulness of a concept of general social status—an unwarranted position, in our view—this does not impair the value of the proposal that status consistency or crystallization be used as an independent variable in behavior research. His own research, the first phase of a continuing study of status crystallization, used four vertical hierarchies: income; occupational prestige, as measured by an extrapolation of the National Opinion Research Center (North-Hatt) scale; ethnic status, as rated by a group of students from the community studied; and education. The population studied was a random sample of the residents of metropolitan Detroit. Respondents were divided into groups of “high” and “low” status crystallization. After control for status differences, low crystallization was found to be associated with a statistically significant greater tendency to prefer the Democratic party and to give “liberal” responses to a series of economic-political questions. Thus the tentative conclusion is proposed that low-status crystallization is associated with political liberalism. Analysis of particular paired variables of inconsistency revealed a tendency for certain pairs containing the “low ethnic” category to be more closely related to liberalism than the other pairs.

These findings are particularly interesting in view of the recent attention devoted to the role of status considerations in political behavior in a series of essays by prominent historians and behavioral social scientists, published under the title of *The New American Right*.<sup>46</sup> In this volume “radical Right” political activities, such as those involved in the support of McCarthyism, are interpreted as, in part, a function of status inconsistencies and tensions produced by new social and economic trends on the American scene. It is possible that further research will show that status inconsistency, as a general concept, is associated with “radical” political tendencies of either the Left or the Right, depending upon the particular pattern of inconsistency, and per-

<sup>45</sup> “Status Crystallization: A Non-Vertical Dimension of Social Status,” p. 405.

<sup>46</sup> Daniel Bell (ed.), *The New American Right* (New York: Criterion Books, 1955). Contributors are Daniel Bell, Richard Hofstadter, David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, Peter Viereck, Talcott Parsons, and Seymour Martin Lipset.

haps other variables of a nonstatus nature, present. At any rate, the concept of status "consistency," "congruency," or "crystallization," is obviously an important one and lends itself to the possibility of further fruitful research.

### Class as Class Consciousness

Marxian class theory, we recall, had emphasized the inevitability of an increasing polarization of modern industrial society into two hostile classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, each based on its own economic interests and function in the productive economy. This awareness of one's class interests, the development of strong identification with others who occupy the same role in the economy and thus share those interests, and the rise of complementary hostility to other classes constitute the "class consciousness" which is a well-known feature of the Marxian analysis. While Marxian theory concedes that members of the functional classes it posits may for a time be unaware of their "true" interests—that is, may have "false consciousness"—eventually, it is alleged, class consciousness, in the above sense, will develop and constitute the psychological climate out of which will arise revolutionary activity. A latter-day attempt to prove the relevance of "class consciousness" as an incipient feature of the American scene, and a concept of social class based on this phenomenon, are found in the work of Centers.<sup>47</sup>

Essentially, Centers's work consists of three elements: (a) a tentative definition of social class; (b) a set of hypotheses about the formation of classes, as defined—this is referred to as "the interest group theory of social classes"; and (c) an empirical study which attempts to prove the validity of the interest group theory.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Centers, *The Psychology of Social Classes* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1949); "Social Class, Occupation, and Imputed Belief," *American Journal of Sociology*, LVIII (May, 1953), 543-55. For critiques of Centers's work, see H. J. Eysenck, "Social Attitude and Social Class," *British Journal of Sociology*, I (March, 1950), 56-66; Cuber and Kenkel, *op. cit.*, chap. x; and, with particular relevance to its relation to Marxian theory, Herman M. Case, "Marxian Implications of Centers' Interest Group Theory: A Critical Appraisal," *Social Forces*, XXXIII (March, 1955), 254-58.

Divisions of a population based on objective factors such as income, wealth, occupation, standard of living, power, or even social status attributed by others, states Centers, are not necessarily classes. These he refers to as "strata." The term "social class" should be reserved, he declares, for groups with which a person *subjectively identifies himself* and with which he has a sense of belonging or solidarity. While this definition in itself does not distinguish social classes from, say, ethnic groups, it is apparent from the context of the discussion that these class groupings, in Centers's scheme, are those related to the economic processes of society. In Centers's own words:

Classes are psycho-social groupings, something that is essentially subjective in character, dependent upon class consciousness (i.e., a feeling of group membership), and class lines of cleavage may or may not conform to what seem to social scientists to be logical lines of cleavage in the objective or stratification sense. . . . Class, as distinguished from stratum, can well be regarded as a *psychological* phenomenon in the fullest sense of the term. That is, a man's class is a part of his ego, *a feeling on his part of belongingness to something; an identification with something larger than himself.*<sup>48</sup>

In short, the essence of class definition is self-attribution or self-affiliation. A person's social class is the class to which he feels he belongs.

The existence of such psycho-social class groupings in a given society need not be assumed in advance, according to Centers, but constitutes a question which may be studied empirically. This leads to the statement of the set of hypotheses which he calls the interest group theory. This theory states that persons in roughly the same economic position or circumstances in a society develop both common interests and values with regard to economic and political issues and a sense of common class membership based on these common interests and values. Again, in Centers's own words:

[The interest group theory of social classes] implies that a person's status and role with respect to the economic processes of society imposes upon him certain attitudes, values and interests relating to his

<sup>48</sup> *The Psychology of Social Classes*, p. 27 (italics as in original).

role and status in the political and economic sphere. It holds, further, that the status and role of the individual in relation to the means of production and exchange of goods and services gives rise in him to a consciousness of membership in some social class which shares those attitudes, values and interests.<sup>49</sup>

The method by which Centers attempts to demonstrate the validity of this theory for American society is an analysis of public opinion polling data secured from a roughly representative cross-section of American adult white males. In the principal study, eleven hundred respondents across the nation were interviewed in July, 1945, with a schedule prepared by the author. Basically, four types of data were obtained: (a) socio-economic attributes of respondents which permitted objective stratification of the sample; (b) respondents' self-identification as to class in answer to a forced-choice question, and their views on the occupational make-up and criteria of classes; (c) attitudes of respondents on various issues of a political-economic nature; and (d) miscellaneous attributes and attitudes of respondents. Inferences made from an extended array of intercorrelations and cross tabulations among these four types of data, particularly the first three, form the basis for Centers's conclusions.<sup>50</sup>

Socio-economic attributes on which objective stratification is based consist of economic position or standard of living, as determined by interviewer's rating; position on a conventional occupational scale; and position on a "power" or "dominance-subordination" (with respect to employment, e.g., employer, manager, independent, employee, etc.) scale. These three scales are also combined into a total "stratification index" or "score." Much of the analysis is carried out with the occupational scale, and at times this is collapsed into the two basic categories of "Business, Professional and White Collar," and "Manual Workers." Political-economic attitudes are inferred from answers to a series of six questions of which the following is a sample: "Would you agree that everybody would be happier, more secure and more prosperous if the working people were given more power and influence

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29 (italicized in original).

<sup>50</sup> Another study of the same type, for the purpose of securing additional information, was made by Centers in 1950 and is reported on in "Social Class, Occupation, and Imputed Belief."



in government, or would you say that we would all be better off if the working people had no more power than they have now?"<sup>51</sup> Answers to these questions were scored in combination on a five-category Conservatism-Radicalism (C-R) scale.

Class self-identification was recorded by answers to the forced-choice question: "If you were asked to use one of these four names for your social class, which would you say you belonged in: the middle class, lower class, working class or upper class?"<sup>52</sup> Centers makes a good deal of his inclusion of the term "working class" as a technique for gaining valid self-identifications, in view of the invidious associations of the term "lower class." Previous poll studies, as he points out, using only the three categories of "upper," "middle," and "lower" class had shown an overwhelming trend to self-identification as middle class. In his own study, however, 51 percent of the sample identified with the "working class," 43 per cent chose the "middle class," 3 per cent the "upper class," 1 per cent the "lower class," and 2 per cent refused to accept any of the choices, answering either "don't know," or "don't believe in classes." Centers considers the four above-named classes to be substantially separate and real entities on the American scene.

Centers's elaborate series of correlations and cross tabulations among the major variables of the study produce results which are nearly always *in the direction* of his interest group theory. For instance, the degree of "radicalism" on the C-R scale, on the whole, increases with lower position on the occupational scale, or any of the other socio-economic stratification indices, thus indicating an influence of "status and role" in economic processes on political-economic attitudes which is in the expected direction. This finding is, of course, not new, and had been previously reported by Kornhauser<sup>53</sup> and Jones.<sup>54</sup> Also, identification with the upper or middle class on the one hand, or with the working or

<sup>51</sup> *The Psychology of Social Classes*, p. 39.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>53</sup> Arthur W. Kornhauser, "Analysis of 'Class' Structure of Contemporary American Society—Psychological Bases of Class Divisions," *Industrial Conflict: A Psychological Interpretation*, ed. George W. Hartmann and Theodore Newcomb (New York: The Cordon Co., 1939), pp. 199-264.

<sup>54</sup> Alfred Winslow Jones, *Life, Liberty, and Property* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1941).

lower class on the other, is substantially related to stratification position. Seventy-four per cent of "Business, Professional and White Collar" persons identified with either the middle or upper class, whereas 79 per cent of all "Manual Workers" identified with either the working class or lower class. As would thus be expected, self-identified class position is also related to Conservatism-Radicalism in the expected direction, with the working and lower classes more "radical." However, there are large overlapings (we shall detail a few below) which considerably vitiate the significance of the thesis at issue. The tetrachoric correlation coefficient for class affiliation and Conservatism-Radicalism is only .49. Centers, however, chooses to regard the evidence as indicating the validity of his interest group theory and the presence in America of a "crude and elemental class consciousness" which tends to polarize American society and which could, under appropriate conditions, lead to the overthrow of the free private enterprise system. We shall specify in the following remarks why we do not regard his thesis as valid or his concept of social class as particularly useful or relevant for the American scene.

1. In view of the presence of the factors of ego-involvement and a cultural ideology which predisposes to avoiding or minimizing verbalizations of class differences in American society, self-identification as to class made in a poll-type interview may be safely calculated to be the least reliable method of ascertaining class structure, even psychologically defined. These factors probably work in opposite directions and since they are likely to have different patterning for different individuals, there is little reason to believe that the errors they induce will cancel themselves out. On the one hand, some individuals will claim a class position or identification which represents only wish-fulfilment or fantasy and is sociologically and psychologically without much meaning. For instance, 18 per cent of the unskilled workers in Centers's sample claimed membership in the middle class! On the other hand, some individuals of higher objective position, more inclined to be influenced by equalitarian ideology, and reluctant to divulge more valid status or class feelings may *phrase* their class affiliation in a poll study of this kind below their more intimately felt class position. Thus we have 7 per cent of "Large Business"

men and 10 per cent of "Professionals" in Centers's sample avoiding the terms "upper" and "middle" class, and identifying themselves as working class. To accept such self-identification made in the context of a brief polling situation, as Centers does, as definitive seems to us to be both sociologically and psychologically naïve.<sup>55</sup>

2. There is considerable reason both on theoretical and empirical grounds to regard the forced-choice type of question which Centers used to obtain class self-identification as methodologically suspect in subject areas of any considerable complexity. By its very nature it structures a situation which for the respondent may not be structured or may be differently structured and presumably places a psychological burden on him to accept the researcher's structuring whether or not it coincides with his own. Eysenck and Crown, in an experimental study of social stereotypes, found that their subjects gave replies to a forced-choice set of categories which in later discussion they repudiated.<sup>56</sup> N. Gross, in a direct test of the Centers methodology with regard to class self-identification, obtained interviews from 935 heads of households in Minneapolis, ascertaining their self-identification as to class first by a sequence of open-ended questions and later in the interview by the use of Centers's four forced-choice categories.<sup>57</sup> The responses to the two methods were substantially different. For instance, whereas on the forced-choice question 45 per cent identified with the "working class," in the open-ended responses only 11 per cent of the same respondents so identified themselves! With the latter method slightly over one-third of the responses piled up in the "don't know" and "No classes" ("Don't think there are social classes" and "I don't belong to any social class") categories. As to which of the two approaches is better suited to

<sup>55</sup> While Centers does show that such "deviants" vary on the C-R scale in the direction of the class with which they claim affiliation, the amount of "typical"—that is, consistent with stratum—C-R attitude is still overwhelming. For instance, 77% of "Business, Professional, and White Collar" persons who identified with the working class are still either Conservative or Indeterminate, rather than Radical. See Table 42, *The Psychology of Social Classes*, p. 126, for this breakdown.

<sup>56</sup> H. J. Eysenck and S. Crown, "National Stereotypes: An Experimental and Methodological Study," *International Journal of Opinion and Attitude Research*, II (Spring, 1948), 26-39.

<sup>57</sup> Neal Gross, "Social Class Identification in the Urban Community," *American Sociological Review*, XVIII (Aug., 1953), 398-404.



gain Centers's goal of eliciting class self-identifications which are part of a person's ego and sense of belonging, Gross quite correctly argues that the open-ended method is the more appropriate because it provides maximum opportunity for the respondent to express his *lack* of identification as well as identification, offers him minimum cues, and allows him to structure the situation himself.<sup>58</sup>

3. The term "working class," which Centers appears to regard as a uniformly understood appellation, actually has a good deal of ambiguity attached to it. While it is true that it is frequently used as a synonym for the manual laboring group, it is also capable of varying interpretations. Particularly does it offer a refuge for those persons of middle or higher status who, influenced by equalitarian ideology, are reluctant to verbalize class distinctions. Such a possibility is in fact suggested by Centers's own data comparing the occupational definitions of the working class made by manual workers who identified with this class and business, professional and white collar persons who also verbalized affiliation with the working class. Both groups show high percentages of their respective members who assigned various types of manual workers to the working class, to be sure. But while 16 per cent of the manual workers placed "small business owners and operators" in the working class, 36 per cent of the business, professional, and white collar group identified this occupation as a working class one. Fifteen per cent of the manual workers placed "store and factory managers" in the working class, in contrast to 29 per cent of the business, professional, and white collar group who assigned this occupation to the working class.<sup>59</sup> And what psychological significance are we to give to the 7 per cent of manual workers and 13 per cent of the business, professional, and white-collar group who assigned "doctors and lawyers" to the "working class," or the 29 per cent of the national sample in the 1950 study who placed "insurance and real estate salesmen" in the working class,<sup>60</sup> other than, alternately, fantasy and "tongue-in-cheek" avoidance

<sup>58</sup> Cf. discussions of this question in Eysenck, *op. cit.*, and Cuber and Kenkel, *op. cit.*

<sup>59</sup> These are approximate percentages read from a chart calibrated at intervals of 10 per cent. See Figure 15, *The Psychology of Social Classes*, p. 136.

<sup>60</sup> See Table 1, "Social Class, Occupation, and Imputed Belief," p. 546.



of invidious status distinctions. Such ambiguity is further suggested in the data on criteria for inclusion in the working class given in the 1945 study by the entire sample. The most frequently mentioned criterion, given by 26 per cent of the sample, was "working for a living"—surely an oblique and potentially nondiscriminatory qualification if there ever was one. Who among adult males does not "work for a living" except *rentiers* and the totally disabled! One can well imagine one of the 7 per cent of Centers's "Large Business" men who identified with the working class<sup>61</sup> genially making this self-identification to the interviewer on the basis of the fact that he, too, "works for a living."

4. There is considerable overlapping in politico-economic attitudes between both the major socio-economic strata and the major self-identified classes, indicating a lack of clearly polarized ideological groups either on a stratum or "class" basis. Over 28 per cent of all urban manual workers scored as Conservative or Ultra-Conservative on the C-R scale. Another 33 per cent were Indeterminate. Surely such a finding does not portend revolutionary class conflict. Over 21 per cent of the business, professional, and white collar group were Indeterminate and nearly 11 per cent were either Radical or Ultra-Radical. Similar findings appear for "class" position. Thirty-five per cent of the working class are Conservative or Ultra-Conservative, and 33 per cent are Indeterminate. Twenty-one per cent of the middle class are Indeterminate, and 11 per cent are either Radical or Ultra-Radical. The finding from Centers's own data which is perhaps most damaging to even the *direction* demanded by his interest group theory is provided by a comparison of the tetrachoric correlation between socio-economic stratification and Conservatism-Radicalism on the one hand and class affiliation and Conservatism-Radicalism on the other. The general stratification index correlation with C-R (.61) is substantially higher than the class affiliation correlation with C-R (.49)!<sup>62</sup> If self-identified classes represent crystallized ideological groupings, surely they should be more closely correlated with the Conservatism-Radicalism scale than strata *per se*. It would seem that Centers's interposition of class

<sup>61</sup> See Table 20, *The Psychology of Social Classes*, p. 86.

<sup>62</sup> See Table 34, *ibid.*, p. 114.

self-identification obtained by a dubious methodology has obfuscated the delineation of cleavages in politico-economic attitudes in American life rather than clarified it.

For the above reasons we cannot accept Centers's concept of class as a useful one, nor agree that he has demonstrated the validity of his interest group thesis, beyond the point of showing, as other investigators had done before, that objective economic and occupational positions are significantly related to attitudes on economic and political questions but with considerable overlapping among the strata. In other words, the study is chiefly of value as an extensive replication of previous research. But the claim to have demonstrated massive and threatening "class consciousness" of the type that generates conflict which "has now reached a critical phase in our own country,"<sup>63</sup> is not borne out by the experimental data in Centers's book and is not supported by the realities of American political and economic life, as is witnessed by the lack of success of political "third parties," the current tendency in both the Republican and Democratic parties towards "moderation" and the relative peacefulness of Big Labor under postwar conditions of substantially equal bargaining strength with Big Business.

This is not to say that subjective feelings of class identification are not useful data for the class analyst. They are—but, as has been demonstrated, it is highly unlikely that they can be ascertained by use of a public opinion polling forced-choice technique, and great care must be taken to separate out both status-fantasy and insincere status self-depreciation—all of which suggests that the self-assignment of social class position may best be studied either through intensive "depth" interviewing or by inference from the status attributions of others. It is probably safe to assume that one's own intimately felt class assignment will not differ considerably from such attribution of status position by others, short of outright delusion. The study of the relationship of status placement, or of economic, occupational, or community power position, to politico-economic attitudes constitutes, of course, a highly important area of stratification research. One need not, however, rest a concept of social class on the degree of

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

that correlation, or obscure the issue by introducing self-identification as to class obtained by a technique which by its very nature cannot be used to elicit data so intimately and affectively bound up with the ego-needs of the personality and conflicting ideological considerations.

### **Class, Occupation, and the Mass Society**

One of the important questions in social stratification analysis is whether the social class system is to be considered a function of the local community or the national, or "mass" society.<sup>64</sup> This question factors into a number of subquestions: (a) Are there different ranges of income, power, and prestige in various American communities? (b) Are the relative status levels or positions uncovered in various communities comparable and thus determined presumably by values common to the mass society, or are they separately unique to the local situation? (c) Are there power and status systems which function on an intercommunity or national level and which cannot therefore be adequately studied by research into one community?

In terms of the tremendous variation in size, wealth, and complexity of American communities the answer to the first question is obviously affirmative. The third question is a more difficult one, but on a speculative or "insight" basis would seem to be answerable in the following terms: Economic and political power are, conceptually speaking, "neutral" or impersonal commodities which may theoretically be wielded across community lines. Money buys in any market, business ownership may extend to any community regardless of where the owner lives, and certain types of political power cross city and state boundaries. Thus any full-scale research into economic and political power must be prepared to cross community lines. Even the most community-focused re-

<sup>64</sup> For valuable discussions of this question, see Paul K. Hatt, "Stratification in the Mass Society," *American Sociological Review*, XV (April, 1950), 216-22; Otis Dudley Duncan and Jay W. Artis, "Some Problems of Stratification Research," *Rural Sociology*, XVI (March, 1951), 17-29; and Harold F. Kaufman, Otis Dudley Duncan, Neal Gross, and William H. Sewell, "Problems of Theory and Method in the Study of Social Stratification in Rural Society," *Rural Sociology*, XVIII (March, 1953), 12-24.



searches, such as those of the Warner school, took into account absentee ownership of businesses and its implications in the small cities studied. Prestige or status extends across community lines in two ways: (a) As Mayer has pointed out,<sup>65</sup> it may be *transferred*—that is, the upper-middle class professional from Community A moves to Community B and by virtue of occupation and style of life is accorded the same status position there, provided that the two communities are not too dissimilar in size and social characteristics; and (b) personal fame and attendant high status, such as that enjoyed by a national political figure, star of the entertainment world, or military hero, by virtue of the mass communications industry, may *exist simultaneously* in all or most American communities. One might therefore distinguish between “locally transferable status” and “national status” with regard to the general American population. Research into the latter obviously requires cross-community comparisons.

The second question, which concerns the comparability of status distinctions made in American communities which vary in size, region, and socio-economic type, has received the widest discussion. Both Hatt and Duncan and Artis have advanced the hypothesis that status structures in particular communities reflect fundamentally the operation of values common to the mass society, with local variations based on specific local conditions. As suggestive evidence both point to comparable judgments about the crucially important dimension of occupational prestige made by respondents in widely varying local situations. Hatt reports that in a study of the prestige ratings given to occupations by a national cross-section of the American population, carried out by the National Opinion Research Center and analyzed by himself and North,<sup>66</sup> “the findings . . . indicate an extraordinary amount of agreement on the prestige value of occupations, regardless of region or size of community.”<sup>67</sup> Duncan and Artis compared the occupational ratings of the North-

<sup>65</sup> Kurt B. Mayer, *Class and Society* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1955), p. 54.

<sup>66</sup> Cecil C. North and Paul K. Hatt, “Jobs and Occupations: A Popular Evaluation,” in *Sociological Analysis*, ed. Logan Wilson and William L. Kolb (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), pp. 464-73; see also Paul K. Hatt, “Occupation and Social Stratification,” *American Journal of Sociology*, LV (May, 1950), 533-43.

<sup>67</sup> Hatt, “Stratification in the Mass Society,” p. 222.



Hatt national sample with the positions given to persons in particular occupational groups by the "Judges' Prestige Ratings" in their Pennsylvania rural community and found "very close agreement."<sup>68</sup> Such evidence is also supported by general theoretical considerations pertaining to the wide dissemination of common stimuli and values by the mass communications media of American society, the proliferation of rapid means of transportation, and the widespread horizontal mobility characteristic of American life. Further research is needed, of course, before the proposition can be accepted as proved and for ascertainment of particular types of local variation on the alleged common set of standards.

Furthermore, for communities of varying size, where the ranges of status levels or positions present are likely to be different, there are difficulties which may turn out either to be purely semantic or to rest on varying social psychological conceptions. That is, an "upper" class in a small town may be similar in power and life style to an "upper-middle" class in the metropolis. One would like to know in such an instance whether the community residents are aware of the extension of the status range outside their community and use the term "upper" only in a local context, or whether they in fact regard their local upper class as being at the apex of American society. This suggests that researchers into the status structure of local communities might well include in their interviewing instruments questions which attempt to probe their respondents' conception of status in the mass society as well as the local setting.

*Mills's WHITE COLLAR:* On the whole, American sociologists have not carried out full-scale studies of social class on the national scene. An exception is C. Wright Mills who, in his book *White Collar*,<sup>69</sup> attempts an over-all view of the recent history and the current situation of "the American middle classes," to quote the subtitle of his study. Methodologically, the study rests on conclusions and inferences drawn from a wide array of separate sources: government statistics, particularly those dealing with his-

<sup>68</sup> Duncan and Artis, "Some Problems of Stratification Research," pp. 25-28.

<sup>69</sup> C. Wright Mills, *White Collar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951).

torical trends in the broad occupational make-up of the American labor force and in average incomes of occupational groups; data on labor union membership; monographic studies of samples of "white collar" people made in selected American communities, including several carried out by the author himself; economic studies of trends in business concentration and centralization; historical monographs on occupational development; social mobility studies; and more impressionistic materials such as vocational guidance and management manuals, the popular literature on how to achieve "success" and "peace of mind," and novels dealing with white-collar types on the American scene. Mills's own insights are not infrequently interlarded with these materials, and the conclusions and assertions of fact are imbedded in a general framework of socio-political dissatisfaction with American society which places the volume substantially in the Veblenian tradition of radical social criticism from the academy.

Mills's operational approach to a definition of class is through occupational function. While he accepts the Weberian multi-dimensional analysis and vocabulary and applies it to the class groupings distinguished, essentially the ascertaining criterion used is that of occupation. The middle classes are distinguished from the lower-class production workers by the fact that they wear street clothes at work and deal with symbols and people instead of directly producing tangible goods. The middle classes, as the studied use of the plural implies, are not a homogeneous stratum but are divided into groupings of both a functional and hierarchical nature. Functionally, Mills distinguishes between the "old" and the "new" middle classes. The old middle class, characteristic of the nineteenth-century era of highly competitive free enterprise, consists of independent farmers, business owners, and free professionals. The new middle class is composed of the salaried people who are divided into a "higher" group of managers and salaried professionals and a "lower" group of salespeople and office workers. The overarching term "white collar" is generally, though not with complete consistency, applied to the new middle-class groupings, which represent the characteristic middle-class occupational types of the present and foreseeable future and which draw the major share of Mills's attention. A fuzzy residue of this

definitional scheme is that the dividing line between the middle classes and the upper class or classes is never made clear. At one point large industrial entrepreneurs, executives of big corporations, and "old family *rentiers*" are spoken of as "upper class," but since Mills includes an analysis of corporation executives at all levels in his discussion of "white collar worlds," since "captains of industry" are a part of the old middle-class context, and since his occupational definition of middle class includes all these types, no clear line between the upper and middle classes emerges from his analysis. As we have pointed out earlier, this type of vagueness is an inevitable concomitant of a one-dimensional occupational approach to class determination.

Mills's essential aims are to demonstrate the decline in importance of the old middle-class way of life based on independent ownership of property, small entrepreneurship, and, as in the case of the independent professional, freedom of occupational operation, and the progressive supplanting of this pattern with the new middle-class model of working for someone else or a corporation on salary without ownership of productive property, and to interpret the significance of this change for the people concerned and the society as a whole. The shift from entrepreneurial property to salaried occupation as a way of life is amply documented and there is a convincing delineation of the problems of survival faced by the small farmer and small businessman who make up a substantial part of the remaining old middle class.

The major portion of the study is devoted to a discussion of the ways of life of the new middle classes whose characteristic type is the salaried worker for the large corporation. In their occupational life, according to Mills's analysis, they are faced with massive trends towards bureaucratization, rationalization of work tasks in the direction of greater specialization, mechanization, and monotony, shrinking of the sphere of individual decision making, and the need to manipulate one's personality on the "personality market"—in other words, alienation from both work and self. In consequence, their lives are full of bleakness and dissatisfaction, which is reflected in the frantic search for satisfactions in the realm of leisure and commodities on the basis of vulgar models provided by the mass communications and enter-



tainment industries. These trends are variously described as applying to all the levels of the white-collar world, but they have special force for the lower order of salespeople and clerks. This lower group is also faced by the progressive deterioration of the objective advantages in such criteria as income, education, skills, and ethnic prestige on the basis of which it has traditionally claimed superior status to the production worker.

In the area of power and political action Mills points out with dismay that the white-collar workers have no independent direction or style of their own and constitute an amorphous, undecided, and indifferent mass caught in the middle of the power struggle waged by the organized interests of Big Business, Big Labor, and Big Farmers. Traditionally, they have identified with and followed the lead of the business group, as a result of "false consciousness" as to their objective interests. Some white-collar people have joined labor unions, but these are under the domination of the wage-workers. Thus white-collar workers make up a "rearguard" in politics, the lower levels of which might swing to the support of either business or labor depending on which side was winning at the moment. The ideological base from which Mills evaluates this situation is never made entirely explicit but appears to embrace both a rejection of the labor movement in its modern form as a self-seeking interest group content to press its claims within the framework of a modified capitalist society, and the desire for a "third party" which would question the capitalist way of life itself, or at least the existing power structure. The true interests of the white-collar group, Mills seems to imply, lie in the direction of participation in some such political insurgency, an eventuality which he regards as highly unlikely. "There is no probability," he concludes, "of the new middle classes' forming or inaugurating or leading any political movement. They have no steady discontent or responsible struggle with the conditions of their lives. For discontent of this sort requires imagination, even a little vision; and responsible struggle requires leadership."<sup>70</sup> Thus the basic political condition of the white-collar classes is characterized as delusion crossed with apathy and impotence.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 353.



There is little question that this study constitutes a major contribution to the understanding of occupational trends and conditions in the middle-class areas of American life. As a "sociology of occupations" in the middle range, marshaling facts and figures to demonstrate the objective changes in occupational types and conditions of work and advancement in the white collar and middle class worlds of modern America, it is an impressive accomplishment, demonstrating Mills's successful concern for portraying the "main drift" of the society, or in Riesman's graphic phrase, his "grasp of the jugular."<sup>71</sup>

It is less convincing, however, in the psychological attributions which it makes to the white-collar classes—that is, their subjective reactions to these objective changes—and in its analysis and criticism of their political orientations. Are the white-collar people as unhappy, confused, despairing, bleak, and drab as they are presented in this portrait?<sup>72</sup> Perhaps, but the generalizations here rest on no firm base of crucial attitude studies of a quantitative nature made in representative areas of the white-collar world, and appear rather to constitute for the most part conclusions based on Mills's own projection of how he or other intellectuals of similar psyche would respond if placed in sales, clerical, or junior-executive jobs in American business. Furthermore, the leisure and consumption patterns of the American middle classes, while they doubtless represent satisfactions alien to Mills's own values, may very well be subjectively satisfying to those who clamor for them. At any rate, adequate discussion of this problem requires recognition of (a) value assumptions and the possible conflicts of values involved, and (b) empirical studies to determine the degree of satisfaction which existing patterns give to those who pursue them.

Mills's political analysis, while it makes the indisputable point that white-collar people are not organized into interest groups capable of exerting countervailing power against big business, organized labor, and the farm bloc, founders on the point, conceded by Mills himself, of white-collar groups' advances in material prosperity and level of living and consumption, and their

<sup>71</sup> David Riesman, review of *White Collar*, in *American Journal of Sociology*, LVII (March, 1952), 513-15.

<sup>72</sup> See Riesman's discussion of this question, *loc. cit.*

evident lack of dissatisfaction with the system as a whole. If white-collar classes have "no steady discontent" with their condition, why should they form a third party or turn radical? If they can make strong gains by furthering unionism, by working within the general trend of increasing governmental responsibility for minimum social welfare and security, by more effective organizing to exert pressure on the two major parties (admittedly not now done), and by continuing to participate in a generally prosperous economy, what do they have to gain by radical political activity, and of equal importance, what might be lost by such a political move? Since Mills presents no detailed plan of suggested alternative political action, he is in the position of criticizing existing trends without being forced to consider the possible losses attendant on any alternative course of action. The problem of what is "true" and what is "false" class consciousness, a problem of breath-taking magnitude and complexity in the modern social welfare state is solved by fiat, assumption, and value-judgment.

In spite of these strictures, *White Collar* must be regarded as an important attempt to deal with the middle classes in the mass society of modern America by means of occupational analysis. It is a provocative mixture of well-supported generalizations of main trends, sweeping psychological assumptions, and subjective value orientations, presented in vigorous prose. One does not need to agree with all its conclusions to profit from its perceptive overarching view of the tendencies and conditions of middle-class occupational life in contemporary America. Its successes enrich one's understanding of what is happening in the occupational worlds of the middle classes. Its failures point up many of the problems inherent in studying social class in the mass society.

## **The Logic of Stratification Scales**

The literatures of sociology and psychology are replete with studies which in one way or another stratify and sample a population, and study the relationship of these stratified groups to some specific phenomenon such as birth rates, death rates, delinquency, illness, mental disease, education, intelligence, social participation, migration, and many others. Two principal "short-cut" techniques used in these studies for stratification purposes are "socio-economic status" scales and occupational classifications which are declared to equate with social status. These scales and classifications have developed not only as a result of the demands of the research sociologists, but also of the specialists in educational psychology, interested in studying the role of "home background" in children's lives, and the social workers, who face such practical problems as child placement. We turn now to an examination of the logic and "rationale" of these stratification techniques.

### **Socio-Economic Status Scales**

The construction of standardized multiple-factor scales or indexes of "socio-economic status," or some similarly defined stratification variable, follows a rather definite pattern, although there

are individual variations.<sup>1</sup> Basically, there are eight steps involved in the process:

1. Socio-economic status is defined, and its respective subareas are indicated.

2. A number of test items, or questions, are devised which are presumed to be connected with relative vertical position in each of these subareas. These items may be scored as either "present" or "nonpresent," or may be graded along a continuum.

3. These test items are tried out and scored on a sample of respondents, representing a cross-section with regard to some objective factor commonly regarded to be associated with socio-economic status (for instance, income or occupation).

4. Items are validated, or selected. That is, a selection of items from the original scale is made on the basis of statistical techniques which relate the items either to some external criterion, or to an internal criterion (the test itself). The general goal is to obtain those items which show the greatest capacity to discriminate levels of socio-economic status.

5. Weights for the items are derived by statistical techniques. Here, again; the choice of techniques depends on whether an external or an internal criterion is being used.

6. The reliability of the scale—that is, its ability to measure consistently that which it actually measures—is determined by certain standard techniques (test-retest, split-half correlation, etc.).

7. The validity of the scale—that is, proof that it really is measuring what it is designed to measure—is sought. The common procedure here is to correlate the results of the test with those obtained on the same group by some other "socio-economic status" scale, or with occupational or economic divisions.

<sup>1</sup> For a good review of the historical development of these scales and their techniques of construction, see William H. Sewell, *The Construction and Standardization of a Scale for the Measurement of the Socio-Economic Status of Oklahoma Farm Families* (Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College Agricultural Experiment Station, Technical Bulletin No. 9, 1940). See, also, for construction techniques, George A. Lundberg, *Social Research* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942), pp. 288-309.

For an excellent critique of the scales (and also occupational classifications) to which we are heavily indebted, see Genevieve Knupper, *Indices of Socio-Economic Status: A Study of Some Problems of Measurement* (New York: privately published, 1946); also, Genevieve Knupper and Robert K. Merton, "Discussion of Lundberg-Friedman Paper," *Rural Sociology*, VIII (Sept., 1943), 236-39.



8. Norms, or group divisions, along the numerical status continuum may be established. This is an optional procedure, and is sometimes performed arbitrarily, sometimes by examining the relationship of test scores to divisions along some external criterion of status.

It should be apparent that the first of the steps outlined, the definition of socio-economic status, is of crucial importance, for it determines specific procedure in nearly all of the subsequent steps and ultimately is the foundation on which the logic of the scale must rest. Essentially, there are two theoretically possible situations with regard to such a definition:

1. Socio-economic status is a *known and demonstrable attribute*, in which case a sample of individuals or families representing different degrees of this attribute can initially be secured, and the subsequent steps in the construction of the scale or index, i.e., selection and weighting of test items, etc., are based on the degree of ability of the items to distinguish the respondents possessing various degrees of this known attribute. Needless to say, the test population on which the items are originally administered is then the sample group, the "socio-economic statuses" of whose members are already known, and validation then becomes simply a matter of determining whether the final test items predict these various positions with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

2. Socio-economic status is an *unknown but presumptive attribute*, *X*, in which case, the test population is stratified with regard to some variable *presumed* to be highly correlated with *X* (such as income, or occupation), and the selection and weighting of items is then usually based on the capacity of the items to distinguish various levels of scores on *the test itself*, which procedure is further predicated on the assumption that the test scores are highly correlated with *X*. Validity is then gauged by determining the ability of the final form of the test to distinguish various occupational or income levels, or by its correlation with other indices of "socio-economic status" whose construction has been based on a similar series of assumptions. Since ultimate validation of *all* the indices, pending the isolation or discovery of *X*, eventually depends on their ability to distinguish groups differentiated by some external criterion, such as income or occu-

pation, one might well ask why these more easily obtained criteria are not used in the first place, without bothering to construct an index. The only logical answer must be that these external criteria are highly but only imperfectly correlated with *X*. In reply to this, then, it must be pointed out that since the relative merits of the index and the external criterion as predictors of *X* are undetermined, the simpler, external criterion may be just as useful. A possible last resort answer of the Type 2 index maker might be that *X*, or "socio-economic status," is a construct consisting of a combination of positions in the areas which the test differentiates—in other words, *X* is simply what the test measures. In such case, however, validation against some external criterion is obviously superfluous.

The remainder of this discussion will be concerned with definitions and procedures used in four of the best known of the socio-economic scales in the sociological literature: the Chapin,<sup>2</sup> the Sims,<sup>3</sup> the Leahy,<sup>4</sup> and the Sewell,<sup>5</sup> and will compare these with the definitions and procedures of the already discussed Index of Status Characteristics of Warner and associates.<sup>6</sup>

Chapin has offered the classic definition of socio-economic status: "Socio-economic status is the position that an individual or a family occupies with reference to the prevailing average standards of cultural possessions, effective income, material possessions and participation in group activity of the community."<sup>7</sup> These four elements, then—cultural possessions, effective income, material possessions, and social participation—are, in his own words, "assumed to constitute socio-economic status." But, as Knupfer has pointed out, "This is not a definition, but an enumeration of

<sup>2</sup> F. Stuart Chapin, "A Quantitative Scale for Rating the Home and Social Environment of Middle Class Families in an Urban Community," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, XIX (Feb., 1928), 99-111; *The Measurement of Social Status by the Use of the Social Status Scale* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1933); also chap. xix of *Contemporary American Institutions* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1935).

<sup>3</sup> Verner Martin Sims, *The Measurement of Socio-Economic Status* (Bloomington, Ill.: Public School Publishing Co., 1928).

<sup>4</sup> Alice M. Leahy, *The Measurement of Urban Home Environment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1936).

<sup>5</sup> Sewell, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Warner, Meeker, and Eells, *Social Class in America*, cited above.

<sup>7</sup> Chapin, "A Quantitative Scale for Rating the Home and Social Environment of Middle Class Families in an Urban Community," p. 99.

categories of things which are assumed to be related to socio-economic status."<sup>8</sup> And Chapin, in a later revision of the scale (this time referring to it as a "social status" scale) corroborates this remark by admitting that "we *judge* [our italics] the social status of a person," and refers to "our opinion of a person's social status."<sup>9</sup> In other words, socio-economic or social status refers to a set of attitudes to which the four enumerated areas are assumed to be related. The exact relation of these four areas to the attitudes is unknown and never discovered, so that as far as the construction of the scale is concerned, it follows the procedures outlined for Type 2 in our discussion. Items are selected which indicate degrees of cultural possessions, effective income, social participation in the community, and material possessions. "On further analysis, the totals of the weights given to living-room equipment were found to correlate so highly with the combined weights of the four indices that the equipment of the living room could be taken as a fair index of socio-economic status."<sup>10</sup>

Thus the logical formula of the Chapin scale reads as follows: Socio-economic or social status (a set of attitudes) is assumed to be measured by four areas (see above); these four areas are adequately measured by the equipment of the living room; therefore the living room scale measures socio-economic status. Nowhere in this process, however, has the question of the crucial attitudes (socio-economic status) been empirically investigated, for the test population is only occupationally analyzed, and validation is offered only by correlating the results of various versions of the scale with results of other scales or with occupational or income groups (for instance, "professional men's homes," "poor relief cases"). Thus, in the words of Knupfer, "Even if we assume that we know what is meant by status-conferring attitudes, we find in this scale construction a significant hiatus. The most important step of all is lightly by-passed by means of an arbitrary assumption: the relation between status (as attitudes) and the enumerated categories (possessions, participation) is never tested."<sup>11</sup>

The Sims scale, or "score card," consists of a series of ques-

<sup>8</sup> Knupfer, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Chapin, chap. xix, *Contemporary American Institutions*, p. 373.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 374-75.

<sup>11</sup> Knupfer, *op. cit.*, p. 23.



tions administered to school children which is designed to indicate the "socio-economic status" or "certain aspects of the home background" of the pupil's family. The questions deal with such areas as the occupation and education of the parents, the possession of books and magazines, physical necessities and luxuries in the home, and outside contacts of the parents and children. Sims's discussion of what the test measures is of interest here:

It is felt that the possession of the items asked for in the question is indicative of some more general possession which has been called the *socio-economic status* of the family. If pressed as to what is meant by "socio-economic status," one is compelled to answer that it is whatever this instrument measures. This, however, is a useless subterfuge. The need for some label which is generally interpretable is urgent. By socio-economic status is meant nothing more than the possession or non-possession of traits such as those above mentioned. If these traits are present, presumably the child has, both from the cultural and economic standpoint, a more favorable environment than he would have if these characteristics were absent. Furthermore, it is reasonable to suppose that the more characteristics existing, the more favorable the environment.<sup>12</sup>

Thus Sims seems to waver between two interpretations of socio-economic status: either it is *X*, a "general possession," or unknown, of which the various areas are indicative, or it is precisely the combined standings in the areas or items, which combination of traits represents the degree of "favorable environment" for the child—favorable for what is not explicitly stated—but presumably for success in scholastic or, later, occupational achievement. Here, again, however, an empirical demonstration of the relationship between the test areas and the defining criterion—predisposition of the environment for scholastic achievement—is missing. Moreover, in the selection of the test population for item validation, and of populations for final scale validation, the specific environmental areas are not mentioned, but rather ratings are secured of pupils from schools which represent "the best homes," the "average homes," "the poorest homes," etc., and occupational groups—"professional group," "unskilled labor group"—are used. The test population, for instance, is

<sup>12</sup> Sims, *op. cit.*, p. 5.



secured by asking the superintendent of schools in the community to grade the elementary schools into "social levels." Sims thus seems implicitly to be groping towards an interpretation of socio-economic status as social-status levels, although this position is never explicitly taken, and is further obscured by his unproved equation of "socio-economic status" with degree of "favorable environment," his selection of test items on the basis of internal test criteria rather than status-group placement, and by his use, in part, of occupational groups for scale validation.

The Minnesota Home Status Index constructed by Leahy, like the Sewell scale, is characterized by the use of highly sophisticated statistical techniques in the selection and weighting of items, but is perhaps even vaguer than the scales discussed thus far in specifying just what it is that it is measuring. We are told that "The purpose of this study is to construct a scale that will give numerical expression to the nature and extent of variation existing in living conditions in urban homes."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, "Since a measure of environment is used primarily in connection with research concerning children and with social service involving the placement of children, it is important to include all those aspects of home and community life that may impinge directly or indirectly on the behavior and development of the child."<sup>14</sup> But what behavior and what kind of development are only incidentally specified. Again we must extrapolate and assume that the environmental conditions in mind are those which are related to scholastic or eventual occupational achievement; and, again, the relationship of the test areas—Children's Facilities, Economic Status, Cultural Status, Sociality, Occupational Status, and Educational Status—to such achievement is assumed rather than demonstrated.

The items themselves are questions or objective observations filled in by the investigator in a home interview. In accordance with "Type 2" procedure, the test population of six hundred families is selected to give an occupational cross-section of the community, the selection and weighting of items is based on the relationship of the items to the test itself, and validation of the test

<sup>13</sup> Leahy, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

is secured by correlation with scores obtained on a sample of the test group with the Sims Score Card, and by testing the ability of the scale to differentiate two occupational groups, "professional men" and "day laborers." In other words, "Home Status" is only vaguely defined; in the event that it is meant to indicate degree of favorable environment for scholastic achievement, such a relationship is perhaps presumptive but undemonstrated; the construction of the scale is based on the assumption that the combination of items is "home status," without further explanation or definition; and the validation procedure is concerned only with another scale and with occupational groups.

Sewell's carefully constructed scale is designed to measure the "socio-economic status" of Oklahoma farm families. It is offered as the first standardized scale in the rural field, although the constructor cautions that restandardization procedures should be used if the scale is to be administered to rural population groups in other areas. Regarding the question of what socio-economic status is, however, Sewell accepts without question the definition of Chapin, adding the following comment: "Socio-economic status is thus considered as a complex pattern, made up of inter-related parts, which functions as a unit in evoking a response. In other words, this definition hypothecates [*sic*] that these parts work together consistently to determine the status level of the family or individual."<sup>15</sup> This does give us the concept of socio-economic status as a "status level" which "evokes a response," but the ramifications of this are not explored, the relationship of status level to the four areas in Chapin's definition is not demonstrated, and the concept plays no empirical part in the selection of the test population or the validation procedure.

Accordingly, a series of items which fall into the familiar four categories of cultural possessions, effective income, material possessions, and participation in the group activities of the community is selected. The test population consists of eight hundred Oklahoma farm families representing a cross-section of tenure status types and economic planes of living. Item selection and weighting are based on the test itself rather than on any external criterion, and validation is gauged by correlating the results of the

<sup>15</sup> Sewell, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

scale with those given by other socio-economic status scales on the same population, by correlating with certain economic variables, and by the securing of significantly different mean scores for owners, tenants, and laborers. Thus "Type 2" procedure is consistently followed, and socio-economic status is either an unknown X or "what the test measures."

It should be obvious from the preceding discussion that until the concept of socio-economic status is clearly defined, the construction and validation of scales designed to measure it must be based on theoretical inadequacies. Perhaps the key difficulty is illustrated by the nature of the descriptive term itself—*socio-economic* status—a term which combines at once two dimensions of stratification, social and economic, in the unproved assumption either that they act as a unit as a stimulus for evoking responses, or that they are perfectly correlated with one another. Throughout this entire work we have emphasized the need for isolating stratification variables, considering them separately, and studying their covariation empirically. This analytical framework applies with equal force to the concept of socio-economic status. One dimension of stratification is social—that is, the evaluation of prestige position in the community; another dimension is economic power, as measured by wealth or income; another is political community power, in terms of ability to make decisions enforceable on other members of the community; another might be "cultural" quality of home, in terms of subjective standards agreed on by educators; and so on. If the data for the particular variable are easily obtainable, there is no need for a scale or index. If not, an index may be in order as a time-saving device for future researchers. But the framers of a scale must choose which of the stratification components they wish to measure. To lump them all together is justifiable neither on any theoretical basis, nor on the basis of available research evidence considered in earlier chapters, which indicates that these stratification components do *not* vary perfectly with one another. At any rate, in the words of Knupfer, "the unity of status should ultimately be decided empirically."<sup>16</sup> Since there is little likelihood that this unity *can* be

<sup>16</sup> Knupfer, *op. cit.*, p. 28. This point is also well made by Knupfer and Merton, *op. cit.* and by Jane Loevinger, "Intelligence as Related to Socio-Economic



demonstrated, socio-economic scales based on "buckshot" definitions must continue to wallow in the haze of theoretical uncertainty which so obviously surrounds them.<sup>17</sup> The roughly empirical usefulness of the scales, it should be noted, is not here being questioned. Since there probably are (on the basis of existing correlation studies of prestige, occupation, income, etc.) correlations of .5 and above among many stratification components, the scales undoubtedly serve as rough measures of position on any one of the standard stratification dimensions.<sup>18</sup> But this is far from theoretical justification of their scientific adequacy and does not obviate the necessity for scale construction which is carefully based on that particular dimension of stratification pertinent to the problem at hand.

If recourse is had to the position that socio-economic status is simply "what the scale measures," then the implications of this position must be faced. Briefly, these are that (a) the scale measures (granted, for the moment, the adequacy of its items) an artificial construct consisting of relative positions in two or more discrete areas, which raises the question of what the usefulness of the construct is for the researcher's problem; (b) validation of the scale against anything except itself is illogical; and (c) no two scales measure exactly the same thing, unless they use exactly the same items. These implications have not been recognized by the

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Factors," in the Thirty-Ninth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, *Intelligence: Its Nature and Nurture: Part I, Comparative and Critical Exposition* (Bloomington, Ill.: Public School Publishing Co., 1940), pp. 159-210.

<sup>17</sup> Kahl and Davis, in a factor analysis of intercorrelations among 19 stratification variables, based on a sample of 219 residents of Cambridge, Mass., found that it was possible to control more variance by extracting two common factors rather than one. See Joseph A. Kahl and James A. Davis, "A Comparison of Indexes of Socio-Economic Status," *American Sociological Review*, XX (June, 1955), 317-25. While they suggest that one common factor may be regarded "for rough purposes" as a single dimension, they go on to state that "a more precise statement would be that the battery of indexes showed two common factors. The first was composed of the various measures of occupation, plus certain variables closely related to occupation, such as education, self-identification, and the interviewer's impressionistic rating of the subject. The second factor was composed of ecological measures plus those of the status of the parents of the subject and his wife" (p. 325).

<sup>18</sup> Lazarsfeld has demonstrated the interchangeability of rough economic indices for obtaining approximately similar distributions of some attitude or behavior variable. See Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Interchangeability of Indices in the Measurement of Economic Influences," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, XXIII (1939), 33-45.



defenders of the scales, and one is not sure that they would be happy with them. Lundberg, for instance, in a vigorous defense of the "operationalist" position, declares that "the statement that socioeconomic status is what a scale for measuring socioeconomic status measures, has therefore the same validity as to say that the conditions and the behaviors which any group calls high socioeconomic status is high socioeconomic status for that group."<sup>19</sup> But if it is group judgments which constitute socioeconomic status, then the initial step in scale construction is to obtain these group judgments, distribute the community members accordingly, and then construct and validate the scale on the basis of this empirically established status distribution.

As far as the writer can determine, the first index to meet substantially the problems suggested in the foregoing critique was the Index of Status Characteristics designed by Warner and associates and discussed in an earlier chapter.<sup>20</sup> Briefly, there is a clear definition of what the index is designed to measure, the test population is initially stratified on the basis of this definition, the selection and weighting of items are related to their predictive ability for the defined variable, and validation is measured simply by the final scale's prediction of the stratification of the original test population.

To review briefly, the Warner Index of Status Characteristics (I.S.C.) is designed to measure position in the prestige, or social status, hierarchy of a community. By means of a series of direct and indirect status ratings obtained from members of the community (the Evaluated Participation [E.P.] method also described earlier), 209 families in a small Midwestern city were distributed into a hierarchy of five status groups. On the basis of preliminary inspection of factors associated with status group variation, six factors—occupation, amount of income, source of income, education, house type, and dwelling area—were selected, and each one was made the basis for a seven-point scale. The first form of the index consisted of a simple arithmetic average of the six ratings (high status = low score). The scale was then administered to the test

<sup>19</sup> George A. Lundberg, "The Measurement of Socioeconomic Status," *American Sociological Review*, V (Feb., 1940), 36.

<sup>20</sup> See chap. iv. See, also, Mack's housing index: Raymond W. Mack, "Housing as an Index of Social Class," *Social Forces*, XXIX (May, 1951), 391-400.

population. It was found that the total scale gave better prediction of status-group placement than any one of the items separately. By means of multiple correlation, the most efficient (statistically, and practically, with minimum loss of predictive ability) combination of characteristics for prediction was found to be occupation, source of income, house type, and dwelling area. Optimum weights for these four ratings were determined by means of a regression equation. Norms, or optimum dividing points for status-group division on the numerical continuum, were similarly obtained by means of the regression equation technique. Thus the final scale is constructed on the basis of its ability to produce optimum predictability of status group, or "social class" participation. Validation then becomes simply a question of how efficiently it does this for the test population, for whom the status group placement (E.P.) is known. Comparing the E.P. rating with the I.S.C. rating for this group, it is discovered that the I.S.C. predicts correct E.P., or status-group membership, in 84 per cent of the cases. The series of steps just outlined, it will be noted, corresponds to Procedure 1 as described in the introductory pages of this chapter.

There are a number of problems which remain, of course, even for the Warner index. It is predicated on the accuracy and validity of the discernment of a fivefold status group hierarchy in the community studied, and the correct placement of the 209 families in the test population—that is, the Evaluated Participation method. The deficiencies in this method have already been thoroughly discussed. Greater than 84 per cent accuracy could be sought. Some of the ratings, as, for instance, "house type," involve a considerable and perhaps inevitable amount of subjective judgment. The rating of members of ethnic groups is a problem which has been solved statistically, but not conceptually. The application and validity of the scale, and the estimation of appropriate norms for other communities in other areas and of different sizes are matters for empirical investigation. It does not deal with rural areas. The meaning of different numerical totals within each status-group range needs explanation and clarification (degree of predictability is the Warner answer). It is regrettable, too, that Warner uses without criticism the conventional term "socioeco-

conomic status," and offers, as an alternative usage to status group placement, the determination of socio-economic status "in numerical form" as a function of the scale. In spite of these qualifications, however, the Warner scale, in the logic of its construction, meets the criteria of clear definition, selection of one stratification variable, and construction and validation of the scale on the basis of a test population stratified by the defining quality which the scale is designed to measure. Future constructors of stratification scales would do well to consider the logic of these criteria.

### Occupational Rating Scales

Occupational rating scales may be regarded as an attempt to use an easily obtainable single factor as an indicator of social stratification level. In some instances, the particular dimension of stratification is clearly specified, as, for instance, "prestige"; in other cases, it is not clearly defined, and incidental references are made to "socio-economic status," or combinations of prestige, skill, intelligence level demanded, etc. Critiques of one or more of the various types of classification, on which part of the following analysis is based, may be found in Knupfer,<sup>21</sup> Cattell,<sup>22</sup> Loevinger,<sup>23</sup> Form,<sup>24</sup> Davidson and Anderson,<sup>25</sup> and Hatt.<sup>26</sup>

The occupational scales or classifications may be grouped into three broad types in terms of their technique of construction: (a) "Common Sense" Classifications: this group is made up of classifications of occupations delineated on the basis of the "common sense" judgment of the constructor that the various occupational categories selected are correlated with "socio-economic status," prestige, skill, etc.; (b) Correlations with Intelligence: these involve an attempt actually to correlate specific occupations

<sup>21</sup> Knupfer, *op. cit.*, see particularly pp. 79 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Raymond B. Cattell, "The Concept of Social Status," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XV, Second Half (May, 1942), 293-308.

<sup>23</sup> Loevinger, *op. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> William H. Form, "Toward an Occupational Social Psychology," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XXIV, First Half (Aug., 1946), 85-99.

<sup>25</sup> P. E. Davidson and H. D. Anderson, "Are Edwards' Socio-Economic Levels Economic?" *School and Society*, XLVIII (July 30, 1938), 153-56.

<sup>26</sup> Paul K. Hatt, "Occupational and Social Stratification," *American Journal of Sociology*, LV (May, 1950), 533-43.

with level of intelligence found or demanded in the occupation; (c) Prestige Ratings: these represent empirical attempts to secure prestige or status ratings of occupations or occupational types, or to correlate occupation with degree of community status of respondents.

*Common Sense Classifications.* "Common sense" classifications of occupations into functional types, with the explicit or implicit designation that these categories are associated with social status, or "socio-economic status," have been numerous in the social science literature. Of these classificatory schemes, the one offered by Alba M. Edwards,<sup>27</sup> of the United States Bureau of the Census, bearing the prestige of an official government agency and incorporating census occupational titles, has been the most widely known and used, and will bear the focus of this discussion.

In view of the institutionally authoritative nature of the Edwards classification and the extensive use to which it has been put, there is surprisingly little in the way of introductory remarks which explain and justify its specific construction. The stated aim is to classify gainful workers into "social-economic groups," or to bring together "all of the workers belonging to the same social-economic class." Two classificatory principles seem to be used: a division between "head workers" and "hand workers," and a division of the hand workers according to skill:

Many persons have desired a classification of occupations according to skill. A classification of all occupations according to skill, if it could be made, would be very useful; but a complete classification by skill is impossible, since many occupations do not lend themselves to such a classification. Indeed, none of the professional, proprietary, official, managerial, or clerical pursuits lends itself readily to a classification by skill; and it is doubtful whether any of them may be properly so classified, since in none of them is skill or manual dexterity the chief characteristic. In fact, it is believed that only those occupations in which the expenditure of muscular force is an important character-

<sup>27</sup> Alba M. Edwards, "A Social-Economic Grouping of the Gainful Workers of the United States," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, XXVIII (Dec., 1933), 377-87; and *A Social-Economic Grouping of the Gainful Workers of the United States* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1938), which contains more detailed information.



istic can be properly classified by skill. While it is plainly impossible to draw a hard and fast line between those occupations characterized principally by the exercise of muscular force or manual dexterity and those characterized chiefly by the exercise of mental force or ingenuity—or between hand workers and head workers—such a line of demarcation probably may be made sufficiently exact for our purpose.

The grouping of the gainful workers here presented is not based on skill, except in the case of groups 4, 5, and 6, in which most of the occupations may be more or less readily classified by skill.<sup>28</sup>

Degree of skill among the manual workers is judged partly by length of training necessary. The classification itself reads as follows (specific occupations under each category are given by Edwards in a later table):

1. Professional persons.
2. Proprietors, managers and officials:
  - 2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).
  - 2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.
  - 2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.
3. Clerks and kindred workers.
4. Skilled workers and foremen.
5. Semi-skilled workers:
  - 5-a. Semi-skilled workers in manufacturing.
  - 5-b. Other semi-skilled workers.
6. Unskilled workers:
  - 6-a. Farm laborers.
  - 6-b. Factory and building construction laborers.
  - 6-c. Other laborers.
  - 6-d. Servant classes.<sup>29</sup>

These "six main groups" are "arranged approximately in descending order of the social-economic status of the workers comprising them."<sup>30</sup> We are not told specifically whether the subgroups are ranked in descending order within the major classification, but presumably not, since the "descending order of social-economic status" refers only to the "six main groups."

That there are a number of logical hiatuses in this classifica-

<sup>28</sup> Edwards, *A Social-Economic Grouping of the Gainful Workers of the United States*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

tory scheme is readily apparent. In the first place, the exact equation of all "head workers" and all "hand workers" with respective higher and lower position on the continuum of "social-economic status" (whether either economic position or social status is here in mind) is an assumption for which no convincing empirical proof is presented. Secondly, the assumption that the three grades of skill among manual workers are correlated with status, while a more likely hypothesis, is empirically unproved. (Incidentally, Edwards's confinement of the possibility of skill ranking to manual work seems highly arbitrary.) Thirdly, the hierarchical classification of the three nonmanual occupational categories is arbitrary and theoretically difficult to justify. Fourthly, the assumptions that each major classification contains occupations of equal social status and that there is no overlapping among the categories are patently untenable. Tenant farmers and owners and executives of large manufacturing concerns are grouped together under "proprietors, managers and officials," but they are certainly far apart in economic position, and the presumption of quite unlike social status is high. An executive of General Motors and the proprietor of the corner lunchroom would be similarly classed together, when it is reasonably obvious that they do not belong in the same economic or social category. In the "professional" category, the college president and the vaudeville actor are found together, with some strain on the logic of actual social affairs. Nor is it at all evident that all "professionals" have higher status than all "proprietors, managers, and officials," or that both of these categories do not overlap with "clerks and kindred workers," which in itself contains a wide variety of occupational types (newsboys and medical technicians, for instance, to say nothing of the wide range of specifically clerical jobs).

As for the question of economic position alone, available research evidence indicates considerable overlapping in the Edwards classification even during the period of the late twenties and early thirties. Davidson and Anderson, in a study of occupational groups in San Jose, California, for 1928-1932, correlating the Edwards classification with income, reported that "33 per cent of all clerical workers were found receiving between \$1,500 and

\$2,000, while an identical percentage of the semi-skilled laborers were located within this income interval."<sup>31</sup> These two categories, it will be noticed, are not even adjacent. The income means correlated more closely with the Edwards classification, although even for this rough measure the "proprietors" group ranked higher than the "professional" for 1928, 1929, and 1930, and for the entire five-year period. Since the thirties, large-scale advances in income made by skilled and semi-skilled workers in the United States as the result of a high level of employment, increased productivity, and the power of organized labor, unmatched by gains of similar magnitude on the part of the general mass of white-collar workers and many salaried professionals and small proprietors, have made the Edwards scale even less useful as an index of the relative economic positions of occupational groups. For instance, in 1954, data for employed males over fourteen reveal that "craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers" had a median income of \$4,290, which was higher than the median for either "self-employed managers, officials and proprietors, except farm," or "clerical and kindred workers."<sup>32</sup>

In a later publication Edwards attempts a validation of his scale by use of income and educational data from the 1940 census. However, the data reveal many of the problems just noted. Skilled workers earn a higher median income than white-collar workers. The educational breakdown (education is offered as a partial index of social status) shows that clerical workers have completed 1.3 more years of schooling than even nonfarm proprietors, managers, and officials.<sup>33</sup>

In short, although the Edwards occupational classification may have substantial value as a *functional* classification, its use as

<sup>31</sup> Davidson and Anderson, "Are Edwards' Socio-Economic Levels Economic?" pp. 154-55.

<sup>32</sup> United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 19, Oct., 1955, Table 5. For a valuable summary of recent changes in income distribution which includes occupational breakdowns, see the Census monograph by Herman P. Miller, *Income of the American People* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1955), chap. viii. See, particularly, pp. 105-9. See, also, The Editors of *Fortune*, *The Changing American Market* (Garden City, N. Y.: Hanover House, 1955), chap. iii.

<sup>33</sup> Alba M. Edwards, *Comparative Occupation Statistics for the United States, 1870 to 1940* (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1943), pp. 180-81.

either a *social status* or an *economic* index is subject to severe limitations. It may be questioned, in fact, whether any one-dimensional classification based on occupational function alone can be adequate for such purposes. Obviously, the questions, "What *kind* of profession?" "The proprietor of *how large* a business?" "What *kind* of clerical work?" etc., are pertinent to social and economic placement, thus suggesting the need for combining several dimensions for a more adequate classification. Several of the other "common sense" classifications make such an attempt at "two-dimensional" classification.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, all the "common-sense" classifications suffer from the rather crucial limitation that their correspondence to an economic or social hierarchy is largely assumed rather than empirically demonstrated.

*Correlations with Intelligence.* In discussions of the relative status of occupations, the assumption is frequently made that occupations demanding higher intelligence have higher status. The use of the Barr scale<sup>35</sup> in the Terman study of gifted children and in other studies is based on this premise. In the construction of this scale one hundred representative occupations were ranked by thirty judges on a scale of 0 to 100 according to the grade of intelligence which each was believed to demand. Numerical values were then assigned to these occupations on the basis of the ratings. Another, more direct relating of occupation to intelligence was carried out by Fryer, who, using the intelligence scores made by army recruits of World War I on the Army Alpha test, computed means for each occupation. Approximately one hundred occupations were thus listed in order of their intelligence means.<sup>36</sup>

The major difficulty with occupational classifications based on intelligence levels as indicators of social status is that the close positive relationship between intelligence and occupational status

<sup>34</sup> For instance, G. N. Kefauver, V. H. Noll, and C. E. Drake, *The Secondary School Population*, National Survey of Secondary Education, Bulletin No. 17, 1932, Monograph No. 4 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1933).

<sup>35</sup> This scale, constructed by F. E. Barr, is described in Lewis M. Terman and others, *Genetic Studies of Genius* (Stanford University, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1925), I, 66 ff.

<sup>36</sup> Douglas Fryer, "Occupational Intelligence Standards," *School and Society*, XVI (Sept. 2, 1922), 273-77.



is assumed rather than empirically demonstrated. While such an assumption has a certain rough plausibility, it rests on the further premise of the existence of a perfect rational and functional base to stratification and ignores the role of idiosyncratic cultural values in assigning status and rewards, and the part which such individual characteristics as "personality," energy (or "drive"), and aggressiveness play in status achievement. Thus an occupational-status scale based solely on intelligence, while it might have a crude usefulness, is likely to be nondiscriminatory or even fallaciously discriminatory within certain segments of the hierarchy of occupational statuses.

A few studies contain correlation coefficients for intelligence and status of selected occupations, but considerably more evidence on this relationship is needed before comprehensive generalizations may be made. Moreover, if the relative statuses of the occupations are known on some empirically derived status scale, the use of intelligence as an index of occupational status would seem to be somewhat beside the point.

*Prestige Ratings.* The most direct method of obtaining the relative status of occupations is to ask a group of respondents to rate a list of representative occupations in terms of their judgment as to the relative status, or prestige, belonging to each occupation. A few such studies have used "occupational distance" scales made up to indicate differing degrees of social intimacy which would be accorded to members of different occupations. Probably the first of the prestige ratings of occupations was obtained by Counts.<sup>37</sup> One of the last to appear is the National Opinion Research Center scale formulated by North and Hatt.<sup>38</sup> A bibliography of similar studies is contained in the discussion

<sup>37</sup> George S. Counts, "The Social Status of Occupations," *School Review*, XXXIII (Jan., 1925), 16-27.

<sup>38</sup> Cecil C. North and Paul K. Hatt, "Jobs and Occupations: A Popular Evaluation," in *Sociological Analysis*, ed. Logan Wilson and William L. Kolb (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1949); this article first appeared in the National Opinion Research Center's *Opinion News*, IX (Sept. 1, 1947) and is also reprinted in *Class, Status and Power*, ed. Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953).

preceding the scale offered by Smith,<sup>39</sup> and also in an article extending the analysis of the N.O.R.C. scale by Hatt.<sup>40</sup>

One of the major criticisms which may be leveled at many of the existing empirically derived status rankings of occupations is that they are based on the ratings of students, particularly college students, who represent, of course, a highly selected group both in terms of age and of social and economic position. In those scales where the raters represented a more thoroughgoing cross-section of the occupational community, there is conflicting evidence as to whether members of widely divergent occupational types view the status of various occupations similarly. Hartmann found "little evidence of any marked occupational ego-centrism,"<sup>41</sup> and Cattell obtained a rank order correlation of .94 between the rankings given by twenty college graduates and twenty unskilled and skilled laborers to twenty-six occupations.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, Form discovered that clerical workers and industrial wage workers had markedly different attitudes towards these respective occupations, with each group tending to favor its own vocation comparatively in prestige ranking.<sup>43</sup> The North-Hatt N.O.R.C. ratings, which are based on a nationwide cross-section survey, also revealed that respondents rated their own occupations "considerably higher" than the sample as a whole. This study also reported other differences in evaluation by age, sex, education, economic level, community size, and region. However, numerical values for the magnitudes of the differences are generally not given. As we have pointed out earlier, Hatt has stated with reference to two of the variables that "the findings . . . indicate an extraordinary amount of agreement on the prestige value of occupations, regardless of region or size of community."<sup>44</sup>

The general question of consistency in ratings and the problem of the meaning of averages derived from highly variant ratings have found no satisfactory solution. Smith, for instance,

<sup>39</sup> Mapheus Smith, "An Empirical Scale of Prestige Status of Occupations," *American Sociological Review*, VIII (April, 1943), 185-92.

<sup>40</sup> Paul K. Hatt, "Occupation and Social Stratification," *op. cit.*

<sup>41</sup> George W. Hartmann, "The Prestige of Occupations," *Personnel Journal*, XIII (Oct., 1934), 144-52.

<sup>42</sup> Cattell, *op. cit.*

<sup>43</sup> Form, *op. cit.*

<sup>44</sup> Paul K. Hatt, "Stratification in the Mass Society," p. 222.

found that while extremes of occupational type were consistently separated, there was considerably more variation in the middle range.<sup>45</sup> Hatt reported that the occupations of the N.O.R.C. scale, when taken as a whole, did not yield a true scale, according to the Guttman technique, and he separated out "situses," or groups of occupations, within which more satisfactory scalability was obtainable.<sup>46</sup> However, if this standard of rigor is applied, the usefulness of the scale as a whole for application to random samples of the population is left in considerable doubt. It would appear that users of occupational scales for heuristic stratification of populations for the purpose of correlating with behavior variables must be prepared to accept relatively low consistency on some items in order to have an instrument that is usable at all; such an instrument may still, of course, have considerable operational value.

Another question, illustrated by a contrast between the Smith and the N.O.R.C. scales, is how finely calibrated a scale the respondent raters should be required to use. Smith asked his raters to grade one hundred occupations on a one-hundred-point scale. The N.O.R.C. raters used a five-point scale plus a "don't know" category. It would appear that the latter technique has more theoretical justification. To use a very finely calibrated scale would seem to impose an artificially precise framework on the rater. It may well be that persons ordinarily think of many occupations as being roughly equivalent in status, so that the actual status framework in the respondent's mind may consist of four or five or six levels of status each containing a large number of specific occupations. At any rate, the question deserves empirical research. In both cases, however, it should be noted that the raters' judgments were finally converted to a highly calibrated scale.

For a number of reasons, including its use of a national cross-section of the American population as raters and its relative recency, the North-Hatt N.O.R.C. scale appears to be one of the most useful occupational scales available. However, with the passage of time and the pressure of economic and social changes there is always the possibility that shifts in the status of particular

<sup>45</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*

<sup>46</sup> Hatt, "Occupation and Social Stratification."

occupations will occur. A replication construction of this scale based on the judgments of a current cross-section of the American population, with further internal analysis of consistency in judgment, is now very much in order, and should be carried out periodically.

There is an alternative method of empirically deriving the prestige of occupations which has not been widely used up to now, but which has considerable logical validity. That is to discover the occupations or occupational categories associated with previously determined status groups or levels in a community. We may call this the "status association method." Kaufman, and Duncan and Artis, in studies described in an earlier chapter,<sup>47</sup> and Warner and associates, in the construction of the Index of Status Characteristics, have approximated this technique.

Kaufman, we recall, divides residents of a New York rural village area into eleven prestige classes by means of community ratings, and assigns numerical values of 1, 1.5–5.5, 6 to the respective classes. Using an occupational classification modified from the Edwards grouping (modified to "correlate more highly with the prestige classes"), he finds the number of each occupational category in each prestige class, and then computes the "mean prestige" of each category. No measure of dispersion is given, but the dispersion may be inspected from a cross-tabulation of prestige class and occupational category. The resultant array of means<sup>48</sup> is reproduced below (in descending order of status):

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Mean prestige per occupation</i>
Professions	2.2
Operators of "large" businesses	2.4
Clerical workers and stenographers	2.6
Operators of "small" businesses	2.9
Farm operators	3.4
"Store" clerks	3.5
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	3.6
Unskilled laborers (non-farm)	4.1
Combination farm and non-farm laborers	4.2
Farm laborers	4.2

<sup>47</sup> Chap. v.

<sup>48</sup> Kaufman, *Prestige Classes in a New York Rural Community*, p. 10, Table 5.



Duncan and Artis similarly average the scores received on their "Judges' Prestige Ratings" by members of various occupational categories and emerge with a rank order of categories.<sup>49</sup> As we have noted earlier, they compared their rank order of occupational groups with a rank order arrangement of groups made by North and Hatt from their data on ranking of individual occupations and found close agreement.

Warner and associates, in deriving a seven-point scale of occupations for the Index of Status Characteristics, attempt by inspection of the association of occupational types with previously determined status group membership to isolate those occupational categories most closely associated with each status group, and with skill qualifications. They begin with a functional occupational classification prepared by Edwards for the Census Bureau. However, this classification was considerably modified in the direction of making it multidimensional: "In making these changes the primary criteria were level of skill that a job required and prestige value attached to a job."<sup>50</sup> Disregarding the skill requirement for the moment, we note that Warner thus empirically adds a dimension to the classification by inspecting the actual distribution of occupational types throughout the status group hierarchy. Thus, "this distinction between large and small proprietors was made since it was known that proprietors have different status and different prestige in the community, depending partially on the size of their business."<sup>51</sup> The category "small proprietors" was ranked lower than "skilled workers" because it was empirically observed that "for the most part, small proprietors had a lower status than skilled workers."<sup>52</sup> "Large proprietors" and "top professionals" were given the same rating because it was observed that they "had about the same rating in the community."<sup>53</sup> In the final two-dimensional seven-point occupational scale,<sup>54</sup> professionals are distributed through three points of the scale, proprietors and managers through six, clerks through five, etc. War-

<sup>49</sup> Duncan and Artis, "Some Principles of Stratification Research," p. 26.

<sup>50</sup> Warner, Meeker, and Eells, *Social Class in America*, p. 133.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>53</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140-41.

ner's inclusion of the skill requirement as a factor in the classification somewhat obscures the clarity of the empirically derived status criterion, but the essentials of the process are well illustrated by the Warner technique. An intermediate version of this occupational scale had a correlation of .91 with E. P., or status-group participation, and turned out to be the best single factor (of the original six in the I.S.C.) for the prediction of status-group placement.

Since the dividing points on the "second dimension" (businesses of various sizes, types of professions, clerks, etc.) are empirically derived from the status judgments of a particular community, the application of a scale derived from the "status association method" in its precise form to other communities of different types and sizes becomes problematical. Further research is needed to discover the variation in scales which may be demanded by different types of communities. However, the broad outlines of the procedure just described have much to commend them, for they establish occupation as an indicator of *general status position in the community*, which, from one point of view, is an even more pertinent method than the direct status rating of occupations. However, as has already been indicated, the two techniques will probably not give basically dissimilar results.

For a substantially valid single factor index of status position, a well-constructed scale of occupations based on either the "status rating" or "status association" method undoubtedly offers promising possibilities. The relative ease with which the occupation of a respondent may be obtained is, of course, another point in its favor. Two major principles, however, for its construction would seem to follow from our discussion. When broad occupational categories are used, the scale should be flexibly two-dimensional at the cost of breaking up superficially logical functional groupings, and it should be empirically derived from the status judgments of either a national cross-section sample or a representative sample of the population (or equivalent group) to which it is to be administered.

## **A System of Social Class Analysis**

Social-class analysis represents an attempt to come to grips with the cumulative effect of basic economic factors in stratifying a modern industrial society. Economic factors, however, do not operate in a vacuum. They function within a particular political and community power context which they, in turn, condition. They are associated with particular occupational specializations. They have the effect through time of producing a status order, and this status order in turn plays a role in determining economic rewards in the current society. These economic factors, furthermore, make for different levels of consumption and correspondingly different "ways of life," or cultural attributes. The cumulation of these phenomena produces restrictions on intimate social contacts which lead to "group life" divisions in the society. All of these phenomena, set in motion basically by the operation of the economic system, in turn work back to some extent on the economic mechanism itself and affect its operation. The complex and innumerable interweavings of economic factors with politico-community power, with the status structure, with occupational pre-emption, with cultural attributes, and with group-life divisions constitute what may be called the social-class system.

In the basic conceptual scheme with which we have surveyed and analyzed the foregoing materials, we have emphasized the necessity for distinguishing among the separate factors or variables

listed above in order that their precise relationships, structural and dynamic, may be empirically discovered. That is, economic power, status-group participation, and politico-community power are closely enmeshed in the actual life of the society. The exact nature of their intercorrelation at any particular point in time we have called their *structural* relationships; the exact nature of their causal effects upon one another through time we have called their *dynamic* relationships. In order to obtain reasonably accurate information on both these types of relationship, the factors themselves must be conceptually distinguished, initially, and a continuum of each must be carefully constructed so that the interplay of the variables can be discovered. For instance, if we wish to study the interrelation of economic power with politico-community power, we must first set up categories to measure economic power, secondly set up adequate categories to measure politico-community power, and then discover by empirical investigation how persons who rank high (or low, etc.) on the first continuum function on the second continuum. Basic neglect of such conceptual distinctions and the consequent focusing of interest on only one dimension have constituted one of the major defects in American research into class. As Kornhauser has pointed out:

The first requirement is that investigators concern themselves with clearer specification of the class variables and with the relationships among them and between them and the class characteristics stressed by other social students. Nothing useful is gained by pretending that a particular chosen simplification of class is the true account, rather than treating it as one interesting aspect that must be more penetratingly analyzed, co-ordinated, and integrated with other concepts. The variables are inseparable aspects of a functional social whole. It is fatuous to think that by singling out a favored class characteristic one thereby excludes the other bothersome variables. They are there even if kept tightly locked in the cellar.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, in dealing with the dynamic relationships of class variables, the question must inevitably arise as to which of the variables are more basic in the causational scheme than others. That is, granted that all the variables interact with and influence

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Kornhauser, "Public Opinion and Social Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, LV (Jan., 1950), 339.



each other once the causal mechanism has been set in motion, is there any one factor which stands out above the rest as being more basic or fundamental in its dynamic impact through time? When the problem is posed in this fashion, there can be little doubt that the economic power factor is the one which meets this qualification more successfully than any of the others. In modern capitalist, competitive society, it is quite obviously economic power which provides the means by which through successive generations particular consumption patterns may be enjoyed, occupational positions may be pre-empted, politico-community power may be appropriated, and status differences may be crystallized. There is thus considerable point to the insistence of those investigators who demand that economic factors be kept to the forefront in class analysis. One of the basic defects of those class researches which have focused on other factors such as, for instance, status-group participation, is that the role of economic power in producing position on the status dimension over several generations of social life has been substantially neglected. In the Warner researches, for instance, we are given an informative picture of the "upper-upper" status group in Yankee City as of the time of the investigation. But the role of (presumably) high economic position operating through successive generations to produce occupational specialization and cultural differences and eventually the crystallization of highest status position is not systematically delineated. Thus, we do not discover explicitly how, and by means of what factors, the "upper-upper" status group developed.

In general, the area of dynamic relationships among class factors is one which needs considerably more research. Such dynamic relationships themselves can be subdivided into two types, depending on the time period under consideration. One type deals with those discernible within the life span of one generation. Here, the basic question is how, in one individual's lifetime, economic position leads to status position, to position in the politico-community power structure, to cultural way of life, and to the restriction of social contacts. And, concomitantly, how does each of the factors other than economic power position further condition economic position in the successive years of the individual's life? For instance, if low status position and lack of cul-

turally provided appropriate motivations and behavior, in themselves, exert an influence in keeping the individual in lower economic circumstances, then these factors, *as well as* the initial economic position must be reckoned with as playing a role in the cumulative set of interacting causes which maintain the individual at a low point on the economic continuum.<sup>2</sup> Or, if mobility in the economic sphere is accomplished, just how is this "converted," to use Benoit-Smullyan's term, into higher status position, or greater political power, etc.? The accumulation of information of this kind about an appropriate number of individuals in the society can then provide some quantitative as well as qualitative expression of the dynamic relationships among the various variables. To obtain information of this kind demands focusing of research on the life-span of a representative sample of given persons in the community. Further information about interrelationships which are demonstrated by incidents or related happenings occurring during the field work of the research would also be valuable. If the owner of the largest factory in the community, by virtue of his position as President of the School Board, succeeds in discharging the local "liberal" high-school civics teacher, or if the bank cuts off credit, without sound financial reason, to the "nonconservative" newspaper, then dynamic interrelationships between economic power position and politico-community power position are being demonstrated.

Furthermore, as Lenski and others have pointed out, the intercorrelation or convergence of stratification variables as they affect the social and psychological situation of a given individual or group presents itself as a fruitful area of analysis. Since an individual or group may rank high on one variable—say, economic power—and low on another—for instance, social status—certain strains and pressures towards marginality may come into being. Thus the study of *stratification inconsistency* as a dynamic variable in itself, hypothetically affecting selected behavior variables, constitutes an important area of social class analysis.

In the second type of dynamic interrelationship among class

<sup>2</sup> See Herbert H. Hyman, "The Value Systems of Different Classes: A Social Psychological Contribution to the Analysis of Stratification," and Genevieve Knupper, "Portrait of The Underdog," in *Class, Status and Power*, ed. Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset, cited above.

factors, information over a period of several generations is called for. To what extent, over the span of successive generations, has economic power been hereditarily maintained? How, during this time, has economic power been converted into status position, into occupational appropriation, into political power, etc.? And how have all these factors interacted with each other to crystallize into the respective positions on respective hierarchies for the current generation of families in the community? In the admitted absence of careful historical data with this type of sociological orientation, such questions can be answered only partially, and perhaps fragmentarily. Nevertheless, they must be asked, and some attempt must be made to search for their answers if we are to have an adequate understanding of the dynamic relationships of class variables through time and of possible chronological changes in the nature of these relationships.

#### STRATIFICATION AND ASSOCIATED VARIABLES

In studying the relationships of variables in class analysis to one another both dynamically and structurally, it is important to distinguish between *stratification* variables and *associated* variables. Stratification in a social order is a concept which refers to a vertical arrangement of persons—a hierarchy—a system of higher and lower, greater and lesser, superior and inferior. Basically, in human society, this stratification rests on one or the other of two categories: *power*<sup>3</sup>—a behavioral system in which some persons directly or indirectly manipulate the lives of other persons, or obtain greater rewards from the society by virtue of differential possession of economic goods or institutional authority—and *status*—by which we mean a psychological system of attitudes in which superiority and inferiority are reciprocally ascribed. Although power and status are obviously closely related, it is important to separate them conceptually, not only because they are intrinsically

<sup>3</sup>For some valuable theoretical discussions of power, see R. M. MacIver, *The Web of Government*, especially chap. v; and Robert Bierstedt, "An Analysis of Social Power," *American Sociological Review*, XV (Dec., 1950), 730-38, and "The Problem of Authority," in *Freedom and Control in Modern Society*, ed. Morroe Berger, Theodore Abel, and Charles H. Page, 67-81.



different categories, but because only in this way can the precise nature of their interrelationships be discovered.

The two basic types of community power structure in the contemporary Western World are the *economic* and the *political*, broadly conceived. The economic power structure deals with differences in income, wealth, the control of employment and its conditions, and the control of prices and credit. The political power structure refers to the formal governmental powers which reside in various positions in the local, state, and national governments, to the system of informal controls which may see these governmental powers manipulated by those who hold no formal office, and to the control of opinion-forming agencies in the community and nation such as the newspaper, the television network, the civic association, and the church. Status positions, conceived in terms of both communitywide and nationwide judgments of general status position, make up what may be termed the *social status* structure. Thus, the three fundamental stratification variables are economic power, political power, and social status.

The role of occupational structure, which has so often been used as the basis for stratification, needs a special word here. In the historical development of modern capitalist society there is little doubt that functional occupational categories have been closely associated, indeed inextricably interwoven, with economic power. Nevertheless, empirical evidence is needed to delineate the exact relationships of occupational categories to the power and status hierarchies in American communities as of the present time. This raises questions, of course, as to the nature of each hierarchy. In correlating occupation with economic power, for instance, certainly more than just income means for each occupational group for a given year must be included. Job security, sickness and retirement benefits, the rise or fall of earning power in middle and old age—all these and many more factors must be considered in the assessment. Once such heuristic assessments have been made, occupation may then be used as an index of the particular stratification hierarchy.

By *associated* variables we mean behavioral categories which are not, in themselves, hierarchical but which are produced by the operation of stratification variables, and which in turn con-



tribute to the dynamics of stratification. The two principal types of associated variables are broad orders of behavior which we have called *group life* and *cultural attributes*. "Group life" refers to the social divisions produced by stratification. Here, the pertinent question is: To what extent are the social relationships, particularly the more intimate ones, of members of a particular section of a stratification continuum confined to other members of the same portion of the continuum? For example, to what extent do persons in the same portion of the economic (or status, etc.) hierarchy confine their clique and associational relationships to each other? This question is of more than structural importance, for to the extent that such confinement exists, the dynamics of economic and political life are presumably affected, and the negatively privileged on the stratification hierarchies are thus additionally handicapped. "Cultural attributes" refers to characteristic behavior, attitudes, and motivations. Here, the question is: To what extent do members of different economic (or status, etc.) aggregates or groups display consistently different behavior, attitudes, and motivations in the various areas of human existence? Again, to the extent that such cultural differences exist, there are important dynamic implications. Differentially privileged environments which inculcate different cultural patterns into their respective members presumably make it that much more difficult for those on the lower end of the stratification hierarchies to rise in the economic, social status, or political scales.

To pose the existence of the three stratification variables of economic power, political power, and social status is not, of course, to solve the problem of their adequate measurement. We turn, then, to a more intensive analysis of the nature of each variable or dimension and the possibility of deriving adequate measures of positions on each one.

*Economic power.* Most studies in stratification have, explicitly or implicitly, used income as the decisive factor in indicating economic power. Other factors, however, have also received attention, including steadiness of employment, ownership of various types of property, access to credit, and degree of dominance-subordination in employment relations. Under optimum condi-

tions of obtaining such information, undoubtedly a properly weighted index making use of all such factors would give the most accurate indication of degree of economic power. Several of these factors require particular discussion.

A three- or four- or five-year average of net income is more valuable than a given year return because it will average out fluctuations which may be due to temporarily operative factors. Moreover, age of respondent and the usual trend of income in the particular occupation through the life span must also be taken into account. It is somewhat doubtful whether a \$4000 income earned by a young man just out of college and clerking in a securities office while "learning the business" prior to assuming a more responsible and lucrative position in the concern can be equated with a \$4000 income for a factory worker who, at age 48, has reached his maximum wage and productivity. Some kind of an empirically derived correction factor should be applied to give a more realistic expression of the different meanings of such numerically equal incomes.

A number of items may be subsumed under the concept of "wealth." These are value of savings, value of insurance, value of ownership, partial or complete, in a business concern or professional practice (as, for instance, a doctor's practice), value of securities, both stocks and bonds, value of real estate, and value of personal property. The total value of all these items would constitute a person's wealth.

A third consideration is access to sources of credit. Information as to frequency of use of banks and personal loan companies for credit purposes, the amounts borrowed, whether loans were for business or personal purposes, and the general "credit risk" reputation of respondents could provide information for rating community residents on a scale indicating the degree of access to sources of credit.

A fourth factor may be called "employment control." This refers to the dominance-subordination factor in occupational relations and to control over the availability of jobs. The scale developed by Centers is useful here.<sup>4</sup> Five categories are distinguished: (a) employer, (b) manager, (c) independent, (d) ten-

<sup>4</sup> Richard Centers, *The Psychology of Social Classes*, pp. 50-52.

ant (as tenant farmer), and (e) employee (nonmanagerial). Employers and managers also differ individually in the degree of their power according to the number of employees and the number of job openings they control. An employer of fifty persons must be rated higher in the power hierarchy than one who employs only five persons. A scale may then be constructed to indicate the relative position of any individual on the "employment control" continuum.

A fifth factor that may be distinguished is the power over determining wages of employees and prices of goods in the market. Here, the power of employers is augmented, or counterbalanced, by the power of labor unions. Both employers and labor union leaders in unionized industries play a role in determining the wage rates of the worker. Any rise in wage rates may be passed down to the consumer in the form of price increases. Thus both employers and labor union leaders wield "felt" economic power. The power of employers and managers in monopolistic or "oligopolistic" industries to fix prices in the virtual absence of competitive processes<sup>5</sup> is an especially important factor to assess in this dimension. Although such a scale of "wage and price control" would admittedly be difficult to construct, the factor is one which must be dealt with in any complete account of the economic power structure.

With regard to all these factors, economic power may obviously extend beyond a particular community, and in some cases will have regional or even national extension. Such extension increases the degree of economic power correspondingly.

These five factors of (a) income, (b) wealth, (c) credit access, (d) employment control, and (e) wage and price control have been distinguished as constituting the basic dimensions of economic power. In a heuristic attempt to combine these dimensions into an over-all rating of economic power, an eight- or ten- or twelve- (or any other number, depending on the degree of discrimination desired) point scale could be constructed for each

<sup>5</sup> See the *Temporary National Economic Committee Investigation of Concentration of Economic Power Final Report and Recommendations* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1941). For a summary and analysis of the TNEC reports and findings, see David Lynch, *The Concentration of Economic Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946).

dimension. Since income and wealth constitute the immediate personal crystallization of economic power, possibly these two dimensions should be given double weight. The total of scores, then, weighted and unweighted, on all the scales would give the person's total "economic power" score.

Such a scale could be used in studies having either a local community or national "mass society" framework. The institutional and associational structures (for instance, corporations, employers' associations, and labor unions) through which such control was maintained and exercised would also constitute a focus of research in this area.

*Political power.* Political power has been broadly conceived here as power to manipulate people through either the formal governing process or the control of opinion-forming agencies of the community and nation. Three dimensions may be distinguished: (a) the formal structure of government, (b) the system of informal controls and influences bearing on political offices and officers, and (c) the controls and influences affecting opinion-forming agencies such as newspapers, radio and television stations, schools, churches, and civic associations.

For the measurement of power in the formal governing structure, municipal offices may be divided (as was Warner's procedure in the Yankee City research) into "high control," "medium control," and "low control" positions, or into further refinements of power and control, if desired. Persons who hold state or national offices may be similarly categorized according to the relative degree of importance of their positions.

Measurement of the degree of power in the "system of informal controls" over political offices and political functioning would admittedly be difficult to make. In many communities, however, it is well known that certain private citizens, either as "political bosses" or as more remote but powerful controlling figures, manipulate the filling of many political offices and their functioning. Intensive investigation in a particular community should provide data for rating of such individuals in the scale of political power, along with those who possess lesser degrees of such power, or none at all. Special consideration given by



the police force, the courts, the school boards, licensing boards, and other municipal agencies to persons of particular economic or status positions provides bases for rating such persons in terms of their indirect influence over the governmental structure. On the state and national level, the study of lobbyists and lobbying groups should prove fruitful in this connection.

Measurement of degree of control and influence over opinion-forming agencies in the community, region, or nation raises further difficulties, yet deserves attempt. Actual incidents occurring during the period of research or verified incidents occurring prior to the research demonstrating the power of individuals from particular parts of the economic and status hierarchies over schools, press, church, and civic associations, and influencing the viewpoint of these agencies on economic and political issues would provide bases for ratings.<sup>6</sup> The structural interrelationships of the economic and status hierarchies with these institutions could provide evidence of at least the possibilities of such control. For instance, if the wealthy department store owner is also the largest advertiser in the community's only newspaper, such structural relationships should at least be noted and investigation made of the editorial views of the newspaper in relation to the views of the advertiser. The economic and status positions of newspaper and radio and television station owners, school and college board members, and officers of civic associations such as chambers of commerce, "service" clubs, labor unions, etc., also demand attention as factors making influence and control possible. From the welter of such evidence, a rough scale may be devised on which degree of "public opinion control" could be indicated. Of course, the "possibility" of control does not necessarily indicate that such control is actually exercised. Nevertheless, if the structural relationships making such control possible exist, and if decisions and pronouncements of the agencies specified are consistently phrased in the direction of the economic interests of those in control, the presumption that such control, direct or indirect, is be-

<sup>6</sup>For a study of power relationships in a large American city of half a million population which relies heavily on interviews with a selected group of community leaders themselves, and which includes considerable anecdotal material to illustrate the exercise of community power, see Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1953).

ing exercised may be high. Thus, the study of such decisions and pronouncements in relation to the range of opinion in the community and to the opinion of those in positions of control must constitute an important part of the investigation.

Sociometric techniques by which community members rated and chose each other with regard to hypothetical situations which called for the exercise of power and leadership constitute another possible method.<sup>7</sup>

The combination of the ratings of a person in each of the dimensions of political power—i.e., direct governmental control, indirect governmental control, and public-opinion control—would give the over-all rating of his place in the hierarchy of “political power.” And, again, the study must include a delineation of the institutional and associational network which helps to make this control possible and which provides the setting for its exercise.

*Social status.* We have pointed out that the term “social status” refers to a psychological system of attitudes in which superiority and inferiority are reciprocally ascribed. The many theoretical and research problems which attend the study of this phenomenon have been discussed in detail in previous chapters.<sup>8</sup> Here we can only summarize briefly and present certain basic distinctions and hypotheses which appear justified by the available evidence and discussion.

In the realm of types of status judgments, a fourfold analytical distinction is minimally necessary: (a) As Davis points out, a given person may be evaluated with regard to some specific “position” which he holds in a social structure—for instance, assistant manager of the First National Bank, president of the community Parent-Teachers Association, or professor. We may call this type of received evaluation *specific status*.<sup>9</sup> (b) He may be evaluated with respect to the way in which he carries out the duties of this position, that is, performs his role. This is what Davis refers to as *esteem*. (c) He may be evaluated in terms of certain personal qualities apart from any particular role performance; he may be

<sup>7</sup> See Hunter, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> Particularly chap. vi. See also chaps. i, iv, and v.

<sup>9</sup> We prefer this term to Davis's term “prestige,” which is too closely identified in the literature with status as a general concept.

generally regarded, for example, as a reliable, industrious man who does not drink and goes to church regularly, or he may have a charismatic personality, or be regarded as highly personable and pleasant in social relationships. We may refer to this as his *repute*. All of these are, in Goldhamer and Shils's term, "segmental status judgments." There is considerable reason to believe that all of these are combined into a "total status judgment" (Goldhamer and Shils's phrase) which constitutes a person's *general social status*.<sup>10</sup> Thus, a person's "general social status" is made up of a combination of all his "specific statuses," all his "esteems," and all his "reputes." It is probable that the specific statuses bulk larger in the total evaluation than the other categories, and that among these specific statuses those pertaining to the occupational-economic complex are given greatest weight.

We may also distinguish between *locally transferable status*, which is the form of general social status existing on the local community level and transferable from one community to another, and *national status*, which attaches to figures of national reputation and renown.

In modern Western societies which have no institutionally defined caste or estate lines it is theoretically conceivable, though not probable, that the standards of status attribution would be so diverse and uncorrelated that no consistent hierarchical structure would be discernible. Thus a situation of *status conflict* could emerge where no social status claims were consistently honored. This is a polar concept in contrast to its opposite, a system of complete and consistent *status hierarchy*, where all status claims were made and evaluated according to a value-system well understood and uniformly accepted by everyone in the society. Such evidence as is available does not indicate that contemporary American society represents either polar type completely but that, while some status conflict exists, the society is closer to the status-hierarchy type—that general social status distinctions, while informally rather than officially maintained, and often obliquely rather than directly expressed, are based on a complex of evaluations which,

<sup>10</sup> In these distinctions we have relied heavily on the work of Kingsley Davis and Herbert Goldhamer and Edward Shils. (See chap. vi.) The concept of "repute," however, is our own and appears necessary for identification of a type of status judgment which overlaps "esteem" but is not coincidental with it.



though varying in detail from person to person and group to group, has a certain rough similarity over the nation and social structure as a whole. Much further research is needed, however, in the area of evocation of the status judgments of residents of American communities, and the research instruments need considerable sharpening in order to break through the barriers of ego-defense and cultural expectation and to separate oblique status attribution from the culturally permissive hostility which may frequently accompany it.

The status dimension, even if hierarchical, may be conceptualized on the one hand, as a *continuum* along which there are no "breaks" which set off status groups, but only individual status positions. MacIver's term *competitive class feeling* is appropriate for the psychological attitudes which would accompany such a status order. At the other conceptual extreme is a status arrangement where groups are sharply delineated on the status dimension, and where these groups face each other with a maximum of group identification and, in some cases, clearly articulated hostility and predisposition to conflict. MacIver has called this type of status attitude *corporate class consciousness*. In an intermediate type, groups on the status dimension exist in only semi-crystallized form with somewhat indistinct and highly permeable boundaries, feelings of status-group identification are general and diffuse, hostility is low, and vocalized articulations or admissions of the status order and one's position in it are oblique and somewhat reluctantly offered. We have called the characteristic type of status feeling here *generalized class awareness*.

There is little evidence to support the hypothesis that corporate class consciousness exists in any significant degree on the American scene. The evidence on the question of the relevance of the status continuum theory versus the hypothesis that semicrystallized groupings and generalized class awareness characterize American society is conflicting. However, as we have indicated in Chapter VI, it seems unlikely, in view of the generally known human tendency to categorize large arrays of ordered data, that some categorization of the status order is not performed by most Americans. If, as we have hypothesized, this categorization is based on value standards which have some rough similarity



throughout the culture, then the hypothesis of generalized class awareness would give a closer fit to the American status order than the concept of an undivided status continuum. Such categorization would not preclude the existence of a further internal status rating within these broad categories on the part of some community residents—a distinction which needs to be faced in community status research.

In general, it would appear that research information on the American status order and the status feelings of residents of American communities is at present of a highly preliminary and tentative nature. We are convinced that it will remain so until there is adequate recognition of the fact that the subject of social status, because of the strong feelings of ego-involvement evoked in such invidious distinctions and the presence of cultural expectations which predispose to offering verbalizations which minimize status distinctions, is one in which routine answers given to strangers in routine interviewing situations cannot be unhesitatingly accepted at face value. As we have indicated earlier, it is not patent that there is any immediately foreseeable, practicable, and complete solution to this problem. It may be not only graceful but scientifically appropriate for sociologists to concede that there may be some information which respondents could conceivably communicate to them if they were willing, but which, on a statistically valid basis, they will not. However, before such a counsel of despair is taken seriously in this instance, it would be wise to attempt a more intensive and sophisticated attack on the question of the status attitudes of the American population with the aid of depth interviews, open-ended questions with considerable probing, suitably designed projective tests, greater rapport conditions, and a general wariness of possible discrepancies between what is said and what is actually felt.

### **Social Classes**

We have now outlined the nature of the three basic stratification variables—economic power, political power, and social status—the need for studying both the structural and dynamic interre-

relationships of these variables with each other, and the need for studying the structural and dynamic relationships of each of these variables with two associated variables which we have called group life and cultural attributes. So far we have been concerned with the nature of the analytical and research task. From the expository point of view, there remains the question of how to apply the term "social class," over which there has been so much controversy and about which there has been such lack of consensus. As we have seen, for the sake of conceptual clarity the term must be applied precisely to *one* of the stratification variables. In terms of the overwhelming dynamic importance of the economic power factor, the term could with considerable cogency be applied to groups formed along the economic power continuum at arbitrarily selected points. Nevertheless, there seems to be at least equal and, in some ways, greater value in applying the term to the social-status levels of a society, and this, in fact, is our proposal. This equation of the social-status structure with "social classes" rests, conceptually, on the nature of the term "social" itself, which is concerned with affective human relationships, on the peculiar focus of the sociologist, and on a hypothesis as to which stratification dimension is most closely related to the repulsions and attractions which divide and integrate social relationships—that is, the factor of "group life." In the words of MacIver and Page, "Sociology alone studies social relationships themselves, society itself. . . . As sociologists we are interested . . . in social relationships not because they are economic or political or religious but because they are at the same time *social*."<sup>11</sup>

Our hypothesis, based on the incomplete and by no means entirely consistent evidence available thus far from the studies considered in this volume, is that, of the three basic stratification dimensions, it is the social status structure rather than the economic or political power dimensions which plays the largest immediate role in producing those social divisions, shifting and amorphous as they may be, of American communities which center around intimate friendships, clique life, association membership and participation, and intermarriage.

<sup>11</sup> R. M. MacIver and Charles H. Page, *Society, An Introductory Analysis* (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1949), p. v.

It should be noted that this has not been demonstrated in rigorous experimental fashion, which would necessitate correlation of each stratification hierarchy separately with social separation. Nevertheless, in the substantial demonstrated correlations of the social-status structure with social separation, in the qualitative remarks of community informants, and in case history material, there is a suggestive accumulation of evidence to support the hypothesis that it is the social-status structure which would most effectively divide the community into social layers. In any sense in which social integration is a desired component of "social class," it would appear that the term is most aptly applied to the social status levels of the community. However, the role of economic power factors operating through time in conjunction with the other factors to produce the crystallizing of the status structure should be kept to the fore at all times.

For the purpose of achieving a consistent terminology, then, we propose that the term *social classes* be applied to the major status divisions which stratify a community, the term *economic classes* be used to designate segments of the economic power continuum (however divided), the term *political classes* be used to designate segments of the politico-community power continuum, and the term *occupational classes* be applied to groups in an occupational classification where the classification has been validated against a specified stratification variable.

It is clear from the available evidence that, structurally speaking, the social status, or social class structure, of American communities is closely associated with the economic-power structure and the political-power structure. The relationship is a positive and substantial one, although the correlation is by no means perfect, and must be discovered empirically in each community or national sample studied. On the whole, however, the higher the level of social status, the more economic power will be found and the greater power to manipulate community affairs through direct or indirect political control, or dominance of the community's institutional functioning and the channels of communication. Occupational complexes also tend to be associated with particular social classes, with the proprietors and executives of the larger businesses, certain of the wealthier professionals, and large land-

owners being characteristic of the highest classes, and semiskilled and unskilled laborers characteristic of the lower classes. The intermediate range, however, shows considerable occupational variation, and the correlation is in no sense a perfect one. In the dynamic interplay of all the stratification variables, the economic and occupational factors undoubtedly play the most significant role. A tendency toward the restriction of "group life" to one's own portion of the status hierarchy and the association of status levels with numerous differential cultural attributes (with some overlapping in both cases) have also been substantially demonstrated.

### Limited Procedure for Smaller Studies

Basic stratification procedures for any one of the three stratification variables constitute an extensive task, requiring a considerable amount of field work. In many types of stratification researches which do not purport to be full-scale community studies, the goal will be simply to correlate position in a stratified sample of persons or families with some specific attitude or behavior pattern (as, for instance, political attitudes or birth rates). For this type of study, where "basic" stratification of the community is impossible from the point of view of time and resources, *limited* items in the particular stratification hierarchy must be used for stratifying the sample. Income, or rent, or home valuation, for instance, may be used as a limited indicator of position in the economic-power hierarchy (with the necessary limitations specified). An occupational scale, previously validated against one of the stratification hierarchies, lends itself to use in such studies. Or a multi-factor index of social status, properly constructed and validated against some actual "basic" social-status stratification procedure, may be used. In all such cases, the particular stratification hierarchy of which the instrument is an index should be rigorously specified, and the necessary imperfections of the stratification procedure admitted.



## The Relationship of Ethnic to Class Stratification

The relationship of ethnic group stratification to social class stratification is a difficult problem for both conceptualization and empirical study. American society is criss-crossed by two sets of stratification structures, one based on social status, economic power, and political power differences, regardless of ethnic background, the other a set of status and power relationships based precisely on division of the population by racial, nationality background, and religious categories into "Old Americans," Negroes, Jews, Catholics, Japanese-Americans, Italians, French-Canadians, etc. The two systems must be kept conceptually separate, for otherwise the nature of their interrelationships cannot be discovered. Operationally, the problem has been handled in class research, thus far, largely by analyzing the class system of the Negro group separately, and including members of other ethnic groups in the general American class system. Actually, however, the nature of the relationship of Negroes to the American class system differs only in degree, rather than in kind, from the relation of other ethnic groups to this system. From the point of view of economic power, political power, and occupational classification, there is no special analytical problem since these are objective manifestations which can be measured without regard to the ethnic factor. However, from the point of view of social classes as status levels with tendencies toward social closure and differential cultural attributes, there are three important questions:

1. In the reciprocal status attitudes of members of American communities, how are the status factor and the ethnic factor operationally related? That is, how does A, member of the Old American group and the "upper-lower" class, articulate his status attitude toward B, a member of the Jewish (or Italian or French-Canadian, etc.) ethnic group who has "upper-middle" class status? In the social class configuration of status and power A is out-ranked by B, but in terms of majority community attitudes he outranks the latter in ethnic group position. Reciprocally, the question reads: How does B articulate his status feelings toward A? Does one set of status feelings (either ethnic or class) dominate

the other? Are they mutually maintained without tension?<sup>12</sup> In a specific behavior situation, would deference behavior follow the class or the ethnic status structure? Research evidence on this set of questions is largely nonexistent, with the exception of some data on Negro-white relations in the South, where the "caste etiquette" enforced by the power system introduces a complicating factor.

2. To what extent is the intimate group life of members of the same social class or status level divided by the ethnic factor? Although the evidence suggests that family, clique, associational, and general intimate social relationships tend to be confined to members of one's own or closely adjoining class, does the ethnic factor further subdivide the social class into subgroups which maintain their own clique and associational relations, and confine marriage to the ethnic subgroup? How do social class and ethnic factors affect the structure of relationships across ethnic and class lines? Do upper-middle-class Jews, for instance, have more intimate social contacts with upper-middle-class Gentiles or with lower-middle-class Jews? Do upper-class Catholics have more intimate social contacts with middle-class Catholics or with upper-class Protestants? Again, the most conclusive evidence on questions of this nature has been gathered in research into the social life of American Negroes. Certainly in the South, and to a substantial extent in the North, the intimate social contacts of Negroes are confined to the Negro group, so that the class structure of the Negro community is a social order of its own (with somewhat differently placed dividing lines from the white class structure) within the Negro social system. Only to the extent that interracial contacts of a social nature increase will this picture be changed. With regard to other ethnic groups, the few studies that touch on this point indicate that the ethnic factor plays a large role in restricting intimate social relationships not only to members of one's own status level or social class, but to members of one's own ethnic group.<sup>13</sup> Only further research can determine

<sup>12</sup> See Everett Cherrington Hughes, "Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status," cited above, for a theoretical discussion of this question.

<sup>13</sup> See August B. Hollingshead, "Trends in Social Stratification: A Case Study," cited above; E. Digby Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class*, cited above; Elin Anderson, *We Americans*, cited above; and

the quantitative extent of this restrictive influence, and its variation for different ethnic groups. Pending such further research, it may be hypothetically advanced that a given social class or status level, considered with a view to its internal structure of social relationships, is subdivided into a series of subgroups determined by the ethnic factor.

3. To what extent does the ethnic factor modify the tendency towards a similarity of cultural attributes in members of the same social class? Presumptively, the effect of the social transmission of areas of behavior related to the particular segregation and discrimination experiences and the nationality background and religious heritage of the ethnic group will modify the relative cultural homogeneity of social classes. Actually, such research evidence as exists indicates that the behavioral similarities of social class are more pronounced than those of ethnic group.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, this is a problem of quantitative expression and requires much further research.

### The Concept of the Subculture

To the extent that ethnic factors in combination with social-class factors tend to delimit the area of intimate social contact in the adult world, and concomitantly provide the particular setting for the socialization of the child, it may be usefully hypothesized that American society consists of a series of informally and unrigorously bounded smaller societal units with varying degrees of interrelationship, each with its own variation and version of the American culture pattern. It is suggested that in this perception lies a conceptual tool which constitutes a useful dimension of sociological analysis.<sup>15</sup> The division of American society into ethnic group systems has been variously recognized in sociological writings; the division into social-class systems has been suggested in many of the researches in class considered in this survey. If

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Mhyra S. Minnis, "Cleavage in Women's Organizations: A Reflection of the Social Structure of A City," *American Sociological Review*, XVIII (Feb., 1953), 47-53.

<sup>14</sup> See, particularly, Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, "Social Class and Color Differences in Child Rearing," cited above.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. August B. Hollingshead, "Trends in Social Stratification: A Case Study."

one adds the "area" divisional factors of urban or rural residence and regional residence (Northeastern United States, South, Midwest, etc.), one has the four major factors or life-conditions (the latter two, perhaps, of less operational significance) which determine, *in combination*, the sociological setting in which the child is socialized, and either remains in or leaves in later life. To the social world made up of the combination of these four factors, this writer has applied the term *subculture*.<sup>16</sup> The concept of the subculture is offered here to refer to a subdivision of a national culture composed of a combination of the four social situations of class status, ethnic background, rural or urban residence, and regional residence, each analytically distinguishable but *forming in their combination a functioning unity which has an integrated impact on the participating individual*. It is a social system which contains the sex divisions and allows for the unfolding of the life-cycle of the individual within its own social borders.<sup>17</sup> Those individuals who change their class status, attempt to change ethnic affiliation, or make decisive moves from one type of residential situation to another, are, in terms of this theory, marginal until they have consolidated their position in the new subculture. This conceptual scheme has implications for personality theory as well, since, in addition to internalizing those aspects of behavior common to the national culture, presumably the individual internalizes the behavior patterns characteristic of the particular subculture in which he was socialized.<sup>18</sup> While this is not the place for a full development of the concept of the subculture, it may be

<sup>16</sup> Milton M. Gordon, "Social Structure and Goals in Group Relations," cited above, and "The Concept of the Sub-Culture and Its Application," *Social Forces*, XXVI (Oct., 1947), 40-42. The term is used elliptically, here, to refer to both the subgroup of the national society and the particular cultural patterns which it carries. For stricter conceptional clarity one might refer to the "subsociety" and its "subculture."

<sup>17</sup> The term "subculture" has had increasing use in the sociological literature to refer to the cultural patterns of any subgroup or type of subgroup which has some persistence through time, such as a gang, a neighborhood, a factory, an age-group, etc. For an excellent study based on this use of the term, see Albert K. Cohen, *Delinquent Boys* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1955). We prefer to reserve its use, however, for the patterns of a subsociety which parallels the main society in that it extends through the entire life-cycle of the individual. A full discussion of this distinction must await a later publication.

<sup>18</sup> See Mirra Komarovsky and S. Stansfeld Sargent, "Research into Subcultural Influences upon Personality," in *Culture and Personality*, ed. S. Stansfeld Sargent and Marian W. Smith (New York: Viking Fund, Inc., 1949).



pointed out that attention has been called in two widely different subfields of sociology, race relations and social pathology, to the need for analysis of these phenomena within the framework of the actual outlines and divisions of American social structure.<sup>19</sup> In the meeting of this need, the concept of the "subculture," which has received partial verification in some of the class materials surveyed in this study, may prove of value.

We have attempted in this volume to analyze, classify, and systematize research and theory in social stratification in the modern period of American sociology. The cutting edge of our analysis has been the principle that social status, economic power, and politico-community power structures must be seen as conceptually distinct entities, whose dynamic and structural interrelationships must be studied empirically. Specific analysis has been made of the nature of each hierarchy or structure. On the basis of research evidence bearing on its existence and nature, and certain theoretical considerations, the social-status structure has been selected as the logical bearer of the term "social classes." Economic and occupational factors operating through time have been adduced as the primary causal determinants of the status order. The empirically determined relationships of these social-status levels, or social classes, to the other stratification structures of economic power and politico-community power, to occupational categories, to group life, to cultural attributes, and to the structure of ethnic group relations constitute the full outlines of the social class system. An accumulated body of research has begun to provide some of the details of these relationships. Considerable further research is needed in this area. Conceptual clarification, however, is a necessary prerequisite to the production and systematic advance of knowledge in any field of social investigation. It is hoped that this volume will aid in this task of clarification and will constitute a contribution to the formulation of systematically related researches which will provide increasing understanding of the structure and dynamics of American social life.

<sup>19</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, "Race Contacts and the Social Structure," *American Sociological Review*, XIV (Feb., 1949), 1-11; and C. Wright Mills, "The Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLIX (Sept., 1943), 165-80. See, also, Milton M. Gordon, "Social Structure and Goals in Group Relations."

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